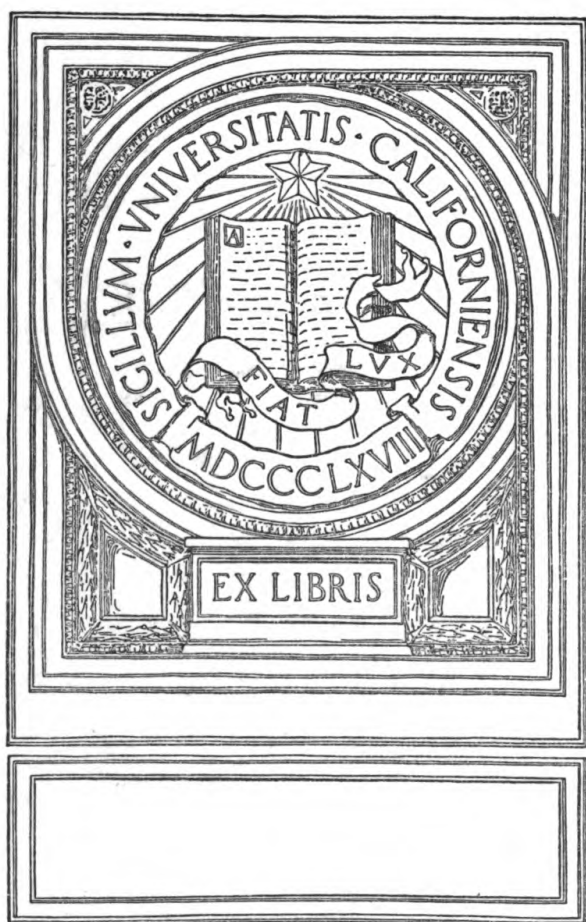


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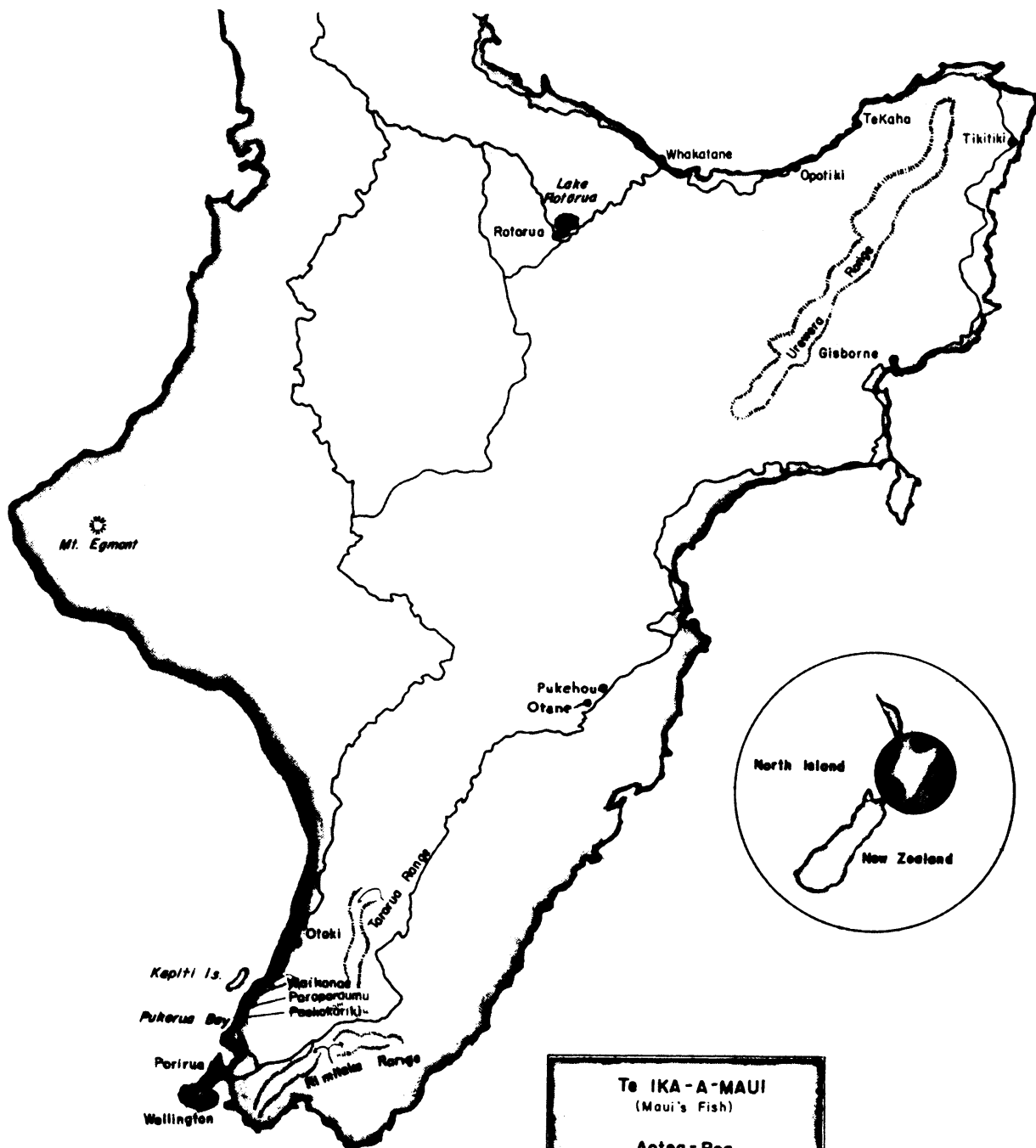


WHERE THE PEOPLE SING

Green Land of the Maoris

This book introduces you to a happy people in a happy and beautiful South Pacific land. Reading it is like stumbling from a confused world into a Utopia that happens to be real. When Captain John Lee Zimmerman of the United States Marines acquired malaria in Guadalcanal and was invalided to New Zealand, he began to encounter the laughing, dignified, brown-skinned Maoris. Then gregariousness and sympathetic curiosity led him to visit these fascinating Polynesians in their North Island villages and homes. His attractive personality won him a friendly welcome from them and a degree of intimacy vouchsafed to few foreigners. His keen eyes and remarkable ability to translate experience into writing of instant charm now place his life with the Maoris at the disposal of readers in a book to discover, cherish, and recommend to friends.

The Maoris and the English-speaking white New Zealanders have evolved a manner of living side by side that is heartening to behold. "The peculiar charm of the Maori," Captain Zimmerman says, "seems to come from the delicate and subtle balance he has struck between dignity and humility, strength and gentleness." In *Where the People Sing*, readers half a world away are privileged to accompany the Maoris' friend into their homes, to live with them, and to make friends of the most interesting and attractive men and women of their communities. In the midst of scenery of dazzling and dramatic beauty, we share revelry and sorrow, ancient rites and modern adjustments. This is no ponderous anthropological or ethnological study, but a book to be read and reread for rare and lasting pleasure.



Te IKA-A-MAUI
(Maui's Fish)

Aotea-Roa
(The Long White Cloud)

now called
NORTH ISLAND
of
NEW ZEALAND

WHERE
THE PEOPLE SING



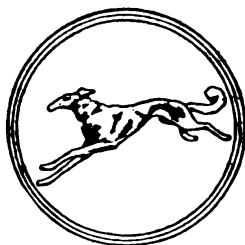
WHERE THE
PEOPLE SING

GREEN LAND
OF THE MAORIS

BY

John Lee Zimmerman

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NEW YORK ALFRED A. KNOPF 1946

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FIRST EDITION

Ki a Hopaea ratou.

ko Weno, ko Rangi ma

[To Hopaea, and Weno, and Rangi,
and all the rest]



Introduction

MIDSUMMER of 1942 was one of danger, real and terrible danger, for Australia and New Zealand. The manpower of each country was in North Africa and in England, half a world away, and the restless, relentless Japanese forces were rolling southward toward their borders in what seemed to be an irresistible flood. The great island bases of the British Empire in China and in Malaya had fallen after a pitiful show of resistance; the countless islands of Micronesia had been occupied and fortified; the great island of New Guinea, with its satellite groups, was being overrun. The danger was imminent and ultimate — once the industrious horde of little warriors succeeded in landing on one or the other of the two great land masses, the inhabitants could look forward only to long years of enslavement.

In June of that year, a small group of United States Marines landed at Wellington, stayed for a few days, and then sailed off to the northwest. A few weeks

afterward, the news came of a blow delivered against the Japanese, the first land offensive of the war. The little force had gone ashore on Guadalcanal and showed every intention of remaining there. It later was understood that this was the first step in an advance by the American forces toward Japan, an advance that never wavered. What seemed at the time to be a forlorn hope was actually the first tentative blow against an overconfident opponent, a searching, probing jab that by chance reached home and put him back on his heels — but few people at the time realized that.

All that was known was that a breathing spell had been gained, a momentary respite from the terror that had begun to hang over the two great islands. A precious interval of time had been granted in which to prepare either for defense or for offense, and the people of both countries were grateful out of all proportion.

In October of the same year, a second group of Marines came to New Zealand. The last group to land came into the peaceful, landlocked harbor of Wellington on a pale, sunny Sunday afternoon and went ashore on the land that was to be its home for a year — a pleasant, quiet land inhabited by a quiet, hospitable people.

And this is the tale of how that people welcomed

one of the group. It was always explained to me that the New Zealander was hospitable from his sense of gratitude — indeed, he told me so himself many times, as though he thought that such a display of goodheartedness needed extenuation. All tommyrot, of course. He threw open to me and to my companions his homes and his countryside and his amusements simply because of something within him, whether he was brown or white, that made it impossible for him to do otherwise. It impelled him to take us to him and to invite us to share whatever he had — and this is the tale of how we did so.



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WHERE
THE PEOPLE SING





THE cold wind whipped the skirts of my raincoat around my knees and crept up the sleeves. It drove the tobacco in my pipe to a red-hot knot, and it brought the tears to my eyes. With it came a fine, soft, caressing rain, a Scotch mist that left my cheeks and the back of my hand and the bowl of my pipe moist and soft as though they had been rubbed with a fine oil. The little gorge ahead of me faded, after the first few hundred yards, into a vague thing of hazy outlines and misty shadows, and the line of low hills that rose before me seemed to march out of the vapor on the right hand and disappear into it on the left.

The watery, half-hearted sunshine that had greeted us as we came into Wellington Harbor the day before had disappeared, and an essence of greyness had taken its place. When I had left the ship, two hours before, the rain had been streaming down, and the sky, the water, the streets, all had been the same dreary leaden color, the very color of the ship that I left moored at Aotea Quay. Even now, from ten miles away, downstream to my left, I could sense rather

than see that the clouds and the haze and the rain were thicker over Wellington than they were near me.

Amid all this I shivered a little and glanced around me again, and the beauty of the place began to grow on me — even the elusive beauty of the swirling mist that softened the details of the hills. Below me lay a valley, perhaps two miles wide, and through it ran a fast, deep stream. Between me and the stream, fenced in by rows and groves of a dark, thick evergreen, was a little meadow, flat and neat and clean, with the greenest grass that ever grew, a green that stood out and quivered in the greyness. Sheep were on it, and it was quiet and peaceful. Even the diminutive train that ran down one side of it at odd times ran with a subdued and apologetic clamor that faded out as the train itself did, into the mist, and left no echo.

The gorge itself, also, had a beauty that was heightened by the mist, for the sharp edges of the gray rocks were softened by it, and the contrast between their color and the olive green of the bush about them was shaded and made less abrupt, so that the whole impression of the place was that of a flowing, graceful complement of quiet shades and colors and shapes. And there was a vague and somewhat disturbing unfamiliarity about the trees, the fantastic, prehistoric looking *punga* tree fern, for instance, that the mist also softened. A small, rapidly flowing stream came in

The trout ignored me, but I whipped the pool happily, and little by little, as I cast and retrieved the fly, the past and the future slipped away and I was alone with the meadow, the stream, and the sulky trout. The tiresome months in the barren, dry brown hills of Southern California, the ugly, complacent avarice of San Diego, the deadly monotony of military life — all these had whetted my appetite for just what lay before me — the cool, moist, intimate beauty of the little valley. As for the immediate future, it was so uncertain that no picture of it could be conjured up. So I fished and smoked and let the mist wet my cheeks.

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“Hey, you Yank down there!” The call came from the hilltop to my left, and I glanced up. A white-haired man, with one arm in a sling, was stabbing the air in my direction with a furred umbrella grasped tightly in his good hand. A healthy old boy he must have been, for his voice came down clear and strong in spite of the wind that was lashing at him.

“Yes, you! Come on up to tea.” And he waved the umbrella hospitably and pointed to a steep pathway and then over his left shoulder. I could just see the corner of a roof between the trees, and all at once I realized that it was late in the afternoon and that I was cold and tired. I could see rising a wisp of smoke that must have come from the chimney of his house, and a vision came to me of an open fire and a warm room and a cup of strong, hot tea. I hooked the fly under a bar of the reel, scrambled up the pathway, and followed Mr. Beatty through his garden and into the reality of the vision. The fire was there, and the

room was warm, and there was hot tea and bread and butter and jam.

We sat and talked and smoked, while the wind brightened the fire and whispered around the house, and I sat in something of a daze, for the hospitality I was being shown was something new to me. Always, no matter where I had gone or what I had been engaged in doing, I had noticed that friendliness, like nobility in the old poetic admonition, evokes its like, and since I am congenitally unable to dislike people, I have always enjoyed perhaps more than my share of hospitality. But there was a new quality here, something that was hard to put a name to, something that was appealing and a little touching.

I think it must have been the complete unself-consciousness, the almost nonchalant way in which I was accepted by Mr. Beatty and his young daughter that so appealed to me, for it seemed that I was treated as though I were an old acquaintance, one whose likes and dislikes and idiosyncrasies were an open book to them and were looked on with a kindly tolerance. Late in the afternoon, when the time was near when I'd have to leave, the old man mentioned, casually, that he had just heard, a fortnight before, that his older son had been killed in North Africa — and at that I looked more closely at him and wondered at the toughness that lay in the fibers of his rugged body.

And then I had to leave, and the daughter guided me down the hill to the miniature station where I was to catch the miniature train that would take me back to the city and the dock and the big grey ship that was being unloaded.

In the weeks that followed, my life went on pleasant lines, for I was put back into the same regiment that had carried me through two years in the ranks, and many of my old friends were there, the friends that one makes in the incessant, shoulder-rubbing intimacy of the peace-time military life. Also, my commission was of a peculiar type that allowed of much personal freedom and that did not demand, in itself, strict observation of the matter of cleavage between officers and men. My duties were light, and our camp lay well away from the city, near the town of Paekakariki, in a glen beside the sea.

The man in the sporting goods store, whom I consulted on all important matters, spoke confidently and encouragingly of my chances for enjoyment in the new camp.

"There are plenty of streams, all along the coast there. See, like this," and he drew a rapid sketch of the range of hills that ran from Pukerua on up the island. "The nearest one to you will be the Waikanae, and you can fish it anywhere, from the sea on up through the gorges. And then there's the Otaki, but

that one floods pretty badly when there's rain in the hills. But you can get plenty of sport within a few miles."

And there, consciously and deliberately, I began to lead two lives. In the hours of duty I went through the motions and made the sounds necessary to the full performance of my role as an officer of the Marine Corps, and when the day's work was done I put the service behind me as well and thoroughly as I could and took advantage of the countryside. I roamed the hills behind our camp and the shore that lay below us. I traveled up and down the coast and I fished the Waikanae River.

The Waikanae comes down from the hills near the Tararua Mountains in a deep and rugged valley that debouches near the sea, forty-eight miles from Wellington. The valley is narrow, even at the mouth, and the stream is lined, on each side, with a strip of bush, as the New Zealanders call their almost impenetrable jungle, and while I have seen many mountain streams, I have never seen another that had the same intimate, secretive kind of beauty. On my many trips up and down the banks, as often as not I would neglect the rod in my hand for the sake of the scenery around me. The excursions nearly always took place in the late afternoon and early evening, and since the hills and valleys on that side of the island were open

to the western sun, I could stay in the bush until the last rays were almost gone.

One evening I got farther afield than I intended, and toward dusk I happened on a pool that was new to me, and so promising was the deep green water that I stayed beyond my time. The pool was in a huge niche in the cliffs, two faces of which formed a re-entrant angle across the stream from the pebbly beach where I stood. The smooth rock rose straight into the air for perhaps seventy feet before it disappeared into the thick undergrowth of the upper hills, and the surfaces of it were covered with a lacy tangle of unbelievably profuse fern growths. The current rushed hard against the angle that forced the stream to make a sharp change to the right in its course.

The pool must have been deep, for the water rushed through it as smoothly and quietly as oil, and only the odd twig or leaf in the current told of the speed of it. Also, by some queer trick of light, the water below the surface was clear and translucent, and I could look far into it, as into greenish glass. A sort of hypnotic effect made me forget my rod and my obligation as a fisherman, and I stood and gazed into it and watched the huge dim shapes of the trout as they cruised back and forth, up and down, moving in three dimensions in their strange, flowing world.

Then, suddenly, it was dark, and the stream was a

silent, dark flowing mass, and I came to myself, to see that the faces of the cliffs had taken on, in their turn, a strange and eerie sort of beauty, for among the ferns and the vines there shone faint lights, the glowing of phosphorescent fungi. Of all shades of amber and greenish blue they were, and they shone with a steady, unwavering gleam, giving the impression of being immeasurably far away and immeasurably close, so that all perspective was gone. Suddenly I felt chilly from the mist rising from the stream and I crashed through the bush to the little dirt road that lies under the hill and leads to the sea.

I fished the Waikanae River almost every night for several weeks and I came to know each pool and rapids and gravel bar for a stretch of five miles. I did little damage to the trout and much good to my soul, for the silent, beautiful glen through which it flowed was a paradise of quietness and peace, where I could be alone and do as I wished at the moment, without thought of whether or not my actions were in conformity with regulations or pleasing to my superiors.

But I never got as far as the Otaki, which was highly spoken of as a stream for sport. During my drives along the highways to and from the river and on my less frequent trips to and from Wellington, I had noticed that a fairly large percentage of the people I saw were black-haired, brown-skinned folk. I noticed,

with much satisfaction and no little curiosity, that they obviously were on terms of good feeling with the white people around them, for I saw them in mixed groups as often as I saw them alone. They were obviously a good sized part of the population in the neighborhood, and aside from their exotic personal appearance, there was nothing to distinguish them from their white neighbors.

Afterwards, when I had come to know them far better than ever I knew their white fellow countrymen, I found out that they numbered nearly a hundred thousand people. I also learned that the equality I thought I had noticed was in fact a very real thing, and that the surest way to get into a real and earnest fight with a white, or *pakeha*, New Zealander, is to make a derogatory remark about one of his Maori fellow countrymen. They live together, in exactly comparable conditions on terms of perfect equality and friendship. They intermarry with absolute freedom, and the children of such marriages are never looked down upon by either group.

All these things I learned later, as I say, and my opportunity for learning them came about in a casual, effortless sort of way. One night, at our officers' mess in McKay's Crossing, early in December, our regimental quartermaster, Cy Sheehan, brought a civilian guest to dinner. Now Cy was a jovial and a convivial

Irishman and his friend was a neat and cleancut young New Zealander named Richard Mortiboy, who came from the town of Otaki, and it was natural for the three of us to foregather over a few glasses of a stimulating but harmless beverage that we were able to secure tax-free from the States. It was also natural that in the conversation that followed I should ask a few questions about the people whose appearance had whetted my curiosity. Mortiboy said that if I thought I would like it, he could introduce me to a fairly representative family of them who were neighbors and good friends of his. He suggested that I come to Otaki the next night — and almost all my experiences in that country for the next year stemmed directly from his invitation and from my acceptance of it.

He and I met at his house, the next evening, and drove together through the pretty little town. A lane led off the main street and up to a quiet, neat little bungalow. It was nearly dark when we got there, but the afterglow of the sun lit up the western slope of the hills and shone down from the clouds onto the paddocks and meadows round the town. It was a well watered plain, and the grass was a live and vivid green, while the gravel of the roads gleamed as though it were fresh washed. He knocked at the door and walked in.

This must have happened, I think, by some queer kind of osmosis, for I do not recall that Hopaea, the mother, or Weno, her sister, ever explained in detail to me that Rangi and Miria were Hopaea's daughters, or that little Aroha, who sat as quiet as a shadow in the corner, was not really her little girl, but the daughter of another younger sister. I listened to the quick and lively conversation, and the beautifully clear and soft English that they spoke, and blessed them inwardly because they were tactful and hospitable enough not to ask me questions or to expect questions of me. And as I sat and listened I uncon-

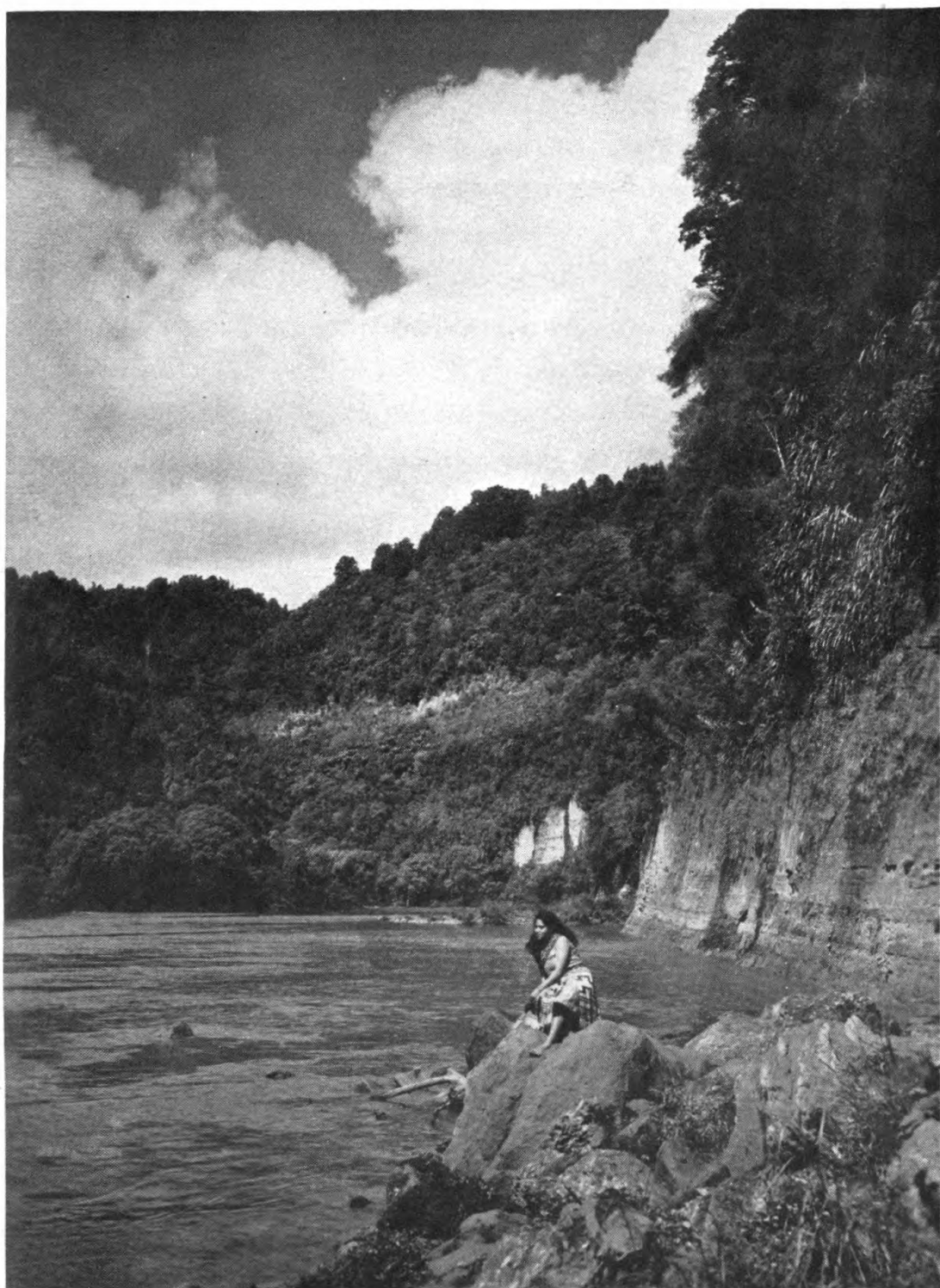
sciously began to store up details of relationship and etiquette, and the things that I heard and remembered were useful and interesting to me later on.

About little Aroha, for instance, whose name means *love* or *affection*, and who is the most appropriately named child I ever saw. Hopaea Te Hana called her "my little girl," and she lived with Hopaea and Rangi and Miria, but I found out that really she was the daughter of Hinehou, the wife of big Maunga and the sister of Hopaea. It seems that when the two daughters, Rangi and Miria, were on the way to being grown up and the house was without young children in it, Hopaea had said to Hinehou that she wanted little Aroha, who was then a baby, to come with her. There were several good reasons why this should have been allowed — Hinehou and Maunga lived well out of the town, on a farm near the bush, and away from all schools; there was already a fairly good-sized family on the farm; several of the children had already suffered to some extent with pulmonary trouble. Any one of these was a good and sufficient reason, but the real one was that the Maori loves small children, and the Maori house that has none is a rare one indeed. So little Aroha, who was twelve years old when I arrived, came to live at the Te Hana house, and we became fast friends.

The desire for children and the affection for them

that the Maori feels leads to many, many cases of informal adoption of the kind that brought Aroha to Hopaea's home, and I have been told that sometimes, because of it, rather complicated mixups occur in matters of family affiliations. But the practice has one extremely important sociological aspect — because of it, the illegitimate child suffers none, or nearly none, of the handicaps that he would suffer elsewhere. Such a child is adopted, and as one girl, Ngahue Puohotaua, told me, "We think that such a child maybe needs a little more affection and care than the rest, and we see to it that he gets it, to make up for his not having a family of his own."

But Dick Mortiboy had said something about music, and suddenly Weno was at the old piano, playing and singing a song that had a familiar tune and lively, sonorous words, incomprehensible words, whose rhythm and musical vowel sounds blended perfectly. One by one the others joined in, singing in parts, until everyone was taking part — I heard little Aroha, who had not moved from the corner nor said a word, singing softly to herself. One tune led to another, and about each of them there was a strange familiarity, as though they were the ghosts of songs I had once known, but the likeness was so elusive that for a while I could make nothing of it. Suddenly there was one about which there was no doubt whatever, but it



"... intimate, secretive kind of beauty"

puzzled me to hear a pure German folksong sung by Maoris in what must have been the pure Maori language. For Weno and Rangi were singing strange and musical words to the tune, *Ach, wie ist's möglich' dann.*

Then I began to understand that the other things I had been hearing were European songs and motifs that the Maori people have borrowed and rearranged as to rhythm and phrasing and made their own, and with very pleasing results, for the product is just enough changed so that there is novelty to it, and yet at the same time it is familiar enough not to sound outlandish.

The music grew livelier and livelier, and as the tempo and the rhythm changed, so also did the actions of those who were singing. Hopaea's lovely, slender hands began to wave and quiver before her with a graceful, undulating motion, and Miria, who was standing behind Weno, began to beat time with her right heel, so that her hips swayed gently in time to the music. Suddenly Hopaea leaped up and called out, "Bring the *poi!*" and as Miria ran off to bring it, whatever it was, she and Rangi stood side by side in the center of the floor, hands extended before them, flowing from side to side, as though they were afraid of losing the beat of the music that was swaying them and living in every movement of their bodies. Miria

returned, handed each of them what looked for all the world like a stocking-darner with a flexible handle, and then the three of them, the mother and her two daughters, began a pretty, graceful dance.

The *poi* is an egg-shaped thing, made of the pith from a swamp plant covered with a woven cover of *raupo*, somewhat like the leaves of the cattail. From the small end of the ovoid runs a heavy plaited cord, eight or nine inches long. The dancer whirls it in her right hand, clockwise and counterclockwise, and by making it strike the back of her hand or the front of her wrist, she produces a soft, thudding, rhythmic beat, a syncopation of the time of the song that she sings as she dances. It is a difficult thing to do alone, and yet here were the three of them, singing and dancing in absolute rhythm, while the soft thudding of the *poi* was so well synchronzied that there was never a false beat.

Song after song they sang, keeping the *pois* whirling, until finally Hopaea sank back into her chair, laughing and exhausted. We talked for a while, and as I was at the door with Dick, saying goodby, they asked me when I planned to come again. Something in the ingenuosness of the question touched me, and I realized that I had been taking it for granted without knowing it, during the past hour, that I would be coming again and often.

2

Beginning at Paekakariki, near our camp, the shore line of the west coast begins to leave the foot of the precipitous hills, and as one goes farther northward, a wide, rolling plain gradually opens up off to the left of the highway. This plain widens steadily to the northward, a broad tract of land that is broken, here and there, by small ranges of sand dunes and is cut everywhere by the countless streams that run down from the hills. A series of pleasant small towns are strung along the railway and the highway, and the names of them indicate that the land was once a populous Maori district.

Paekakariki itself tells a story in its name, for at one time, long ago, the trail which led from the plain to Poneke, which is the Maori form of Port Nicholson, or Wellington, passed under a huge old tree, and a branch of that tree hung low over the road. Now on this branch, or *pae*, the Maori travelers noticed that there was always a congregation of small green parrots, the *kakariki*, and the faithfulness of these parrots to the limb gave rise to the musical name of the town.

Within twenty minutes of the time one leaves Wellington Station, he is beginning to enter country that has been a garden spot for the Maori people for many

years. The stations along the line bear Maori names, and each name deals directly with some characteristic of the spot or with some happening nearby. And the names themselves, aside from their meanings, are strange and musical — Porirua, Paremata (the stern of a canoe), Pahatanui (which should be Pauatahanui, a large *paua* shell), Pukerua (two hills), Paekakariki, Paraparaumu (scraps in the oven), Te Horo (the landslide), Waikanae, and Otaki.

So fertile was this plain and so well suited to the agriculture of the Maoris, that its very fruitfulness brought disaster to the Muaupoko people who were living there at the beginning of the last century. This tribe occupied a large part of the district, and was finally conquered and overrun by the Ngati Raukawa tribe, who, under Te Rauparaha, came across the island in the early years of the century and conquered them with their newly acquired *rakau pakeha*, the white man's musket. And today the Ngati Raukawa live on the land, and the Tahiwī and Te Hana families are of that tribe.

Within a few days after my first visit, I found myself again on the neat little pathway that led through the garden and up to the cottage. Once again it was dusk, but this time the house was empty, and I went back into the village to see if I could find any of the family. Finally someone suggested that I try at the

They were there — as I walked into the hall, I found that the dance was one given by the town of Otaki for my fellow Marines, and the boys were there in force, a hundred or so of them dancing with the local girls, Maori and English alike. But a strange aspect of this struck me at once — for while there were many Pakeha girls sitting out the dances, isolated by the shyness of some of the Marines, every Maori girl and woman in the place was whirling around the floor with a green uniformed partner. I stood and wondered about it, for it seemed strange, and —

The road was dark, and it was nearly a mile into the village. When we had reached the half-way mark,

Each Friday night a similar dance was given for our men, and I went to them regularly, and the details of the one or the other dance have become blurred, but my diary tells me that it was at the first of them that I saw Hine for the first time. The rest of that meeting is as clear as crystal in my mind, and I think it will remain so, for the breath of romance came to me then, very faintly.

was something not quite barbaric and not savage, some hint of a wildness, a primitive quality that showed in a suggestion of bluntness in the angle of her jaw and in her cheek bones, and that showed again in the expression of her eyes. I turned to Hopaea.

"Mrs. Te Hana, who is that tall youngster over yonder?"

"Where? Oh, you must mean Hine. Would you like to dance with her, Hone?"

"No, not just now, thanks. But who is she — I mean, is she Maori? There's something about her looks that doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of you people."

"Well, Hone, it's strange that you should notice that. We don't think that Hine is so different — her Daddy came from Tonga — " and Hopaea gave me a quick sketch of just what had brought it about that Hine lived in Otaki.

Her father, Mafu, had come down from Tonga twenty-five years before, perhaps to go to school, perhaps to satisfy that strange desire for travel that seems to be an essential part of the Polynesian spirit. Be that as it may, he came and stayed, and he met and fell in love with a girl from Otaki, and Hine, the Maiden, was born. She took after her father in looks, said Hopaea, for he was a large man and very hand-

some, and he came from the island's ruling family, being in fact a distant cousin of the queen. This fact of his family connection finally took him from New Zealand, for the queen recalled him so that he could take part in the government of the island, and he had to leave his wife and child behind him to be free to marry in his own land.

Hopaea finished her tale and stood up. "Come, Hone," she said as she crossed the floor. I followed her and met Hine and danced with her. She was a quiet girl, and I think that she was a shy one, but there was a dignity about her that I liked and, like all the Maori girls, she was a graceful natural dancer.

And then the dance was over, and I didn't see Hine for some days, but the picture of her was always in my mind — the figure of a tall, slender, shy girl with a strangely touching air of dignity about her, exotic even among the exotic Maoris.

3

"Hone, you should stop in to see my brother Kingi some day when you go to Wellington. His office is in the Invicta House, and he could answer a lot of your questions for you, better than I can." I had been bothering Hopaea with my queries as to the reason for this and that, and she and Weno and the two girls had been patience itself in explaining.


~~~~~

This time it was a Sunday, and there was warm, bright sunlight on the plain and the hills and the sand dunes between the town and the sea. We were sitting in the little garden, lazy and warm, when Weno suggested that we should go and see the church and the meeting house. The church, she said, was quite worth seeing.

It was all of that. At first glance, from the roadway, it seemed to be no more than the usual country church, except that its setting was, perhaps, a little prettier than ordinary, for it lay on the indefinable line between the town and the country, that vague boundary that runs irregularly about every small community. Before it lay the clean-washed macadam of a winding road that disappeared in a grove of macrocarpa as it wound toward the sand dunes; behind it, running up to a little hill, lay a somber little graveyard, flanked and bordered by more of the dark evergreen. The whole property was fenced, and there was a queerly hung gate at the entrance, to keep out straying sheep and cattle.

Inside, however, there was little to recall the country churches that I'd seen, for aside from the pews, the altar, and the pulpit, it was completely barbaric. Two huge uprights, placed at intervals of a third of the length down the center line, supported a ridge pole that was no less huge and that was, like the sup-

ports, rough hewn from a single giant log. The wood was old, and it was a soft dark brown, warm without being gloomy, and the size of the timbers made the whole building seem solid and rugged.

The altar rail was curved in an arc that stopped just short of being a semicircle, and it was of conventional proportions, supported by carved balusters. Something strange about the appearance of these latter, some asymmetry, some irregularity of line, made me glance at them again, and I saw that while they were of a size throughout, each of them was completely individual as to the intricate carving that covered its whole surface, a swirling pattern of scrolls interspersed with sharp ridge and angle designs. Weno saw me looking closely at them and she came over and explained.

It seems that the church was built about the middle of the last century, entirely by the Maori people of the neighborhood. The beams and the uprights must have been cut far back in the hills, for no timber of that size and kind could be found in the vicinity, and it was transported in a primitive and effective way. The logs were floated down a nearby river to the sea, towed along the coast, probably by canoe, up the Otaki River to the point nearest the site of the church, and thence were manhandled across country to the scene of the building. They were adzed out by hand,

of course, and at least some of the adzes were the primitive, beautifully made stone tools of the natives. Hopaea still had one, lying on the hearth, and many times I have sat before the fire and handled the heavy piece of dark stone and marveled that by using only sand and water and other varieties of stone, the old toolmaker could have shaped such keen, straight edges and such glassy, polished surfaces.

All the building was a result of the communal effort of the Maoris. No record has been kept of the method they used for raising the huge beams to their present positions; it was no small feat of engineering, but it was accomplished, and the upper ends of the uprights were fitted into slots in the ridge pole. The balusters, apparently, were requested from various communities that were represented at the raising of the building, and the skilled carvers of those communities each contributed one or more, all of a size, but each one carved as the whim and the skill of the carver dictated.

It was a Church of England church, of course, and the Maori language had followed the meaning, if not the words, in all details. Across the front of the altar, for instance, the words *Holy, Holy, Holy* gave place to *Tapu, Tapu, Tapu*, while above and to one side of the reredos a huge panel contained the famous assertion *I am the Way*. But the one who trans-

lated that said *Ko Ahau te Huarahi*, and I like the translation better than the original, for it is more assertive, more definite — *It is I who am the Way*.

The meeting house lay on the same side of the village, and in the few hundred yards that we walked, Weno and I traveled the new to the old, from Pakeha things to Maori things, for when we went into the courtyard and across the grass to the long low building in the corner we were in pure Maori territory and in the true center of the Maori life of the community. For wherever a group of Maoris live, there you will find a meeting house. It may be a small and unpretentious affair, as was the tiny old one on the road that ran past the Catholic Church, where Raukawa lived with his family; it may be a large and elaborately carved and decorated one, such as that in Ohinemutu, near Rotorua. Small or large, it is the center and the focal point of the Maori life of its district, and in it are held meetings to discuss Maori business, celebrations for returning travelers, and farewells for those setting out; wedding feasts are held there, and *tangis* for the dead. Traditions are kept alive in them, both in the carvings on the beams and in the life that the people live within the walls.

Raukawa house was perhaps sixty feet long and about a third of that wide, one storey high. The side

walls were low, the ridge line of the hall high, and an extension of the roof came out beyond the front wall to cover a narrow platform porch. The floor was at ground level, the door and the windows were European style, and the roof was composition, but aside from those concessions to Pakeha building practice, the building was entirely Maori, from the odd angle of the roof to the brick red color of all the exterior wood work.

It was easy to see, as I approached it, that it was not an everyday European style building. For one thing, the angle of the roof was more acute, and the side walls were a little lower, but the thing that took my eye at once was that in the angle of the wide bargeboards there was a grotesque, four-foot figure with a spear in his hand, his face a grimacing mask of defiance. Below him, on each side, the bargeboards themselves were a mass of carved scroll work, and I recognised the same patterns here that I had seen in the church, but more elaborate and interspersed with human and semi-human faces. All the wood work was painted an odd, dull, brick red, and the lap-board walls of the building were a neutral dark cream.

I began to realize then, I think, that the carving of the meeting house is the expression of the artistic nature of the Maori in the medium that he has devel-

oped most highly, and yet the patterns he employs are traditional, and they are never changed. New uses are found for them, new ways of treating certain motifs, but the basic patterns are those that in the old days ornamented the bow and stern pieces of his huge war canoes and the handles of his weapons and the paddles with which he drove his canoes from island to island over all of Polynesia.

The lintel and the door frame were carved, and the interior was a series of carved beams that ran from ceiling to floor along the side walls at intervals of five feet. Like totem poles, they were capped by a small human figure, stylized, with grinning face and three-fingered hands, stumpy legs half bent as though he were stamping with rage. Between the beams, the wall was covered with lattice panels, which Weno told me were *tuku-tuku* work — geometric figures of white on a dark background, like very coarse cross-stitch.

As I wandered from beam to beam, something of the somber beauty of the place had a queer effect on me, and I began to think that I could understand something of the meaning of the carvings themselves and beyond that and into the past, something of the thoughts and dreams of the Maori, something of the drive, the urge that holds him closely to the traditional, ancestral things of his life even as he succeeds

in the alien life of the *pakeha* culture about him. Perhaps it was the eyes of the figures, *paua* shell eyes that shone with a purple luster and that seemed to be staring at me and to follow me. Perhaps, too, it was the pair of ancestral figures that crouched in a panel above the door, on the inside wall. Male and female, they squatted side by side, looking somberly and impassively out over the hall, and each grasped the other by the genitals with one three-fingered hand. I looked at them for a long time, with Weno there beside me, and I could see nothing in them but the frank expression of a fundamental truth, and when I finally turned away I thought that I was beginning to understand something of the Maoris.

We went back to Rangatira Street, and once more Hopaea told me that I should really call to see Kingi, and I promised to do so.

I knocked at the door of the little office in Invicta House, and as I knocked, I wondered what this meeting would be like. I had never met Kingi Tahiwī, but I felt that I could not leave Wellington without at least trying to see him, for he was the head of the family, and an old man, and one who knew the customs of his people. Several things remained for me to do before I could return to camp, and already the sun was low. I knocked again, a little louder, and someone told me to come in.

Kingi sat back in a half-dark corner, behind a neat desk covered with small piles of what looked like old manuscript legal papers, and the first glimpse I had of him is the picture that comes to my mind whenever I think of him. A sturdy, stocky man, very dark, with a thick shock of wavy, iron grey hair, and a fine, heavy, strong chin. His nose was large and jutted out from his face and balanced the chin perfectly — but the feature I remember best is his eyes. They looked a bit sleepy and easy-going that afternoon, in the fading light, and they were kind and friendly as he greeted me, and told me that his family in Otaki had said that I would call. He had the Maori's gift for making the guest feel at home, and any self-consciousness I may have felt disappeared before I noticed it, and I was telling him the few things I had learned of his people and of the many things I wished to learn. Then he spoke to me, adding something to my little information, and I listened to his soft, musical voice and realized that while I was speaking to a delightful old gentleman, I was at the same time listening to a cultured one. He ended by extending an invitation.

“Tonight our Club meets — Ngati Poneke, you know — and I hope that you'll be able to come see us. If you can make the trip, I think I can promise you the answer to some of the things you've been asking



me," and he smiled at me from his half-dark corner as I said goodbye.

It was a charming group, I thought, as I watched them line up across the floor. There were people of all ages in it, and yet over it all there was a feeling of something young and vigorous, something that could enjoy life without too much worry about life's problems. I seemed to be looking at a people whose youngsters are happy and whose old people are young — but the girl at the end was arranging the lines, and I was fixed upon her.

"*Hopi!*" and all the hands were placed on the hips.

"*Whiua!*" and the knees relaxed. Then, "*Tahi, rua, toru, wha!*" and she counted, rhythmically, the arms were half raised and the arms extended, sweeping from left to right in time. Then they broke into a song that I came to know well and to love. *Pa Mai To Reo*, Your Voice Comes to Me, they call it, and at one part of the simple, pretty melody, an ancient chant is brought in, and as one half the group sings on, the other half chants the deep throated old *Tahi Miti Toru E!* I listened, entranced, and watched as I listened, for it was an action song, as they call it, when the movements of the hands and arms follow the meaning of the words.

He was right. I learned a great deal because of the

trip I made that night. But I didn't learn it at the meeting of the club. In front of the fire at the home of old Pirikira Heketa, and in the tiny home in the hills near Pukehou, where I went to visit Aroha Niania and her parents and on the trip around the East Cape with Pine Taiapa and his wife — all these places were my classrooms, and it was because of Ngati Poneke that I had access to them. And sometimes I wonder whether old Kingi didn't realize that when he invited me, for he was a wise and tolerant old man.

Later on I came to know the group as individuals, but the first evening they were only groups of happy, attractive people who enjoyed singing and dancing and being bullied by Kingi, who was a taskmaster, grudging praise and hard to please. He would interrupt a song in the midst of things if it did not suit him and he had a caustic tongue when he chose to use it. Generally, when he said nothing, it was a safe bet that the turn was well done — indeed, I think he was deliberately grudging in his praise, for sometimes I would see him smiling slightly, nodding time with his head. Once or twice, indeed, I saw him so far forget his sternness as to call out "*AUE!* —" at the end of the verse, and count "*Katahi, karua, katoru, kawha!*" — and when that happened, it was praise beyond all other praise, for Kingi was pleased.

The Maori lives exactly as does his white neighbor

in a comparable situation. If it is in a farming district, he farms; if it is in sheep country, he is a herder. He works as a shearer or a farm laborer or a dairyman, just as does his white counterpart. In the towns and the cities he lives and works in a similar way — he is a clerk or a government employe or a professional man, and he has the same opportunity for securing work and for advancement in his trade or his profession that the white man has.

In only one way, a most important way, does he differ from his neighbor. He is a Maori, and as such he has a definite link with his past in his present environment. Even though he may live in Wellington and work in a government office, he has and retains the knowledge that he is Maori and that he is a member of a tribe. He knows that the business of that tribe is his business, the responsibility of that tribe his responsibility, and the traditions and the reputation of that tribe his to enjoy and to uphold. It is the realization of this relationship, I think, that leads a New Zealander whose blood is only one-sixteenth Maori to claim that race as his own and to refer to himself as Maori.

The Maori young people who come to the city face the same problems that confront our own young folk in similar cases, but with the Maori, I think, the problems are more difficult. For while the young

man or woman in the United States has been in contact with urban things to some extent, at least through the radio and the press, and has lived vicariously the life of the cities in the movies, for the young Maori the change is complete and fundamental.

He comes, in the first place, from a mode of life in which the individual is an integral part of a group. That group may be the family, or the sub-tribe, or the tribe, and it may live in the remote hills or in one of the small towns or on a farm in the settled country. Always, wherever and however it lives, the communal spirit exists, and the individual is never a lonely one. His responsibilities and his privileges are part and parcel of those of his group. His whole past history and all his heritage dictate that mode of life for him, and the Maori is close to his past.

Again, he has none of the preparation for the severe change that our young people have. The press and the radio to which he may have access are in no way comparable to ours, and the things he sees in the cinema are strange to him, so alien to his life that he is unable to project himself into them or to take vicarious enjoyment in them. When he leaves his home and goes to the city, the change, for him, is basic and absolute, and the impact of the change is tremendous.

I am not sure whether Ngati Poneke was formed

with the idea of providing a haven for those young Maoris who found themselves in Wellington or not. The fact is that when I met them, the club was performing that function. Under the guidance of Kingi Tahiwī and Pirikira Heketa, two old people of different tribes, fifty or sixty people of all ages met once a week to learn and to mingle with each other. Music and old dances were studied, and to some extent at least the old idea of a communal life obtained, for the girls lived in groups around the city and almost never alone. The club gave them a place to go where the emphasis was upon one of the strongest forces of Maori life, and as such it filled a pressing need.

Another of its functions was a self-imposed obligation to entertain the American troops stationed in or near Wellington. And here again the club gave expression to a fundamental idea of Maori life, that of the obligation of hospitality of the *tangata whenua*, the man of the country, to whoever might chance to be his guest. More than an obligation, really — the Maori seems to think of it as a privilege, rather, and always he gives the impression that it is the guest who offers the favor in accepting the hospitality.

Once a week, at one or another of the camps or at one of the two hospitals, the girls would give a program of native songs and dances, and with their cos-

tumes of flax skirts and *taniko* “top parts,” as Mrs. Heketa called them — a necessary but wholly deplorable innovation — they were lovely and exotic guests, and they were greatly in demand. Few of us realized, at first, that all of them worked during the day at the various essential industry plants, and that in order for them to dance, it was necessary for them to travel a total of nearly eighty miles by bus. And it was purely from their goodness of heart that they did it, for the American Red Cross, which arranged the dates for them, supplied only their transportation, and did not even help them with the purchase of their costumes.

There was a restlessness over the camp in those days before Christmas, a vague uneasiness that arose from the knowledge that we were about to leave for the Solomon Islands, where the fighting was still a nip and tuck affair and where our fellow Marines were badly in need of relief. Mingled with the restlessness was a hint of nostalgia, for all of us knew that once we left the shores of New Zealand, we would never again meet with the kind of hospitality that had been shown us there. The contrast between the contemptuous, grasping avarice and intolerance of the San Diego district and the open-hearted friendliness of the Wellington area made the latter all the more enjoyable, and the thought of leaving it behind saddened us.

For myself, I felt as though I were leaving home, for the people of Otaki had made themselves very dear to me. There was a straightforward affection in the way that Hopaea and Rangi and Miria made me at home in the cottage whenever I could come out that was completely disarming and that called up a like feeling in me. I had begun to know the whole family as individuals as well as a group, and as this came about, I found that I was growing to like them for exactly the same reasons that I would like anyone else possessing their manners and friendliness and intelligence.

Hopaea, for instance, would have been a lovable soul in any surroundings in the world. She was small and slight and erect, and her dark face had a pleasant composed look that showed to the best advantage her fine and regular features. Like the voices of others, hers was low and soft, and while she spoke with no accent and her English was perfect, there was a hint of some velvety sound in the consonants and a music in the vowels that made it a joy to listen to her singing or speaking.

Rangi and Miria, her daughters, were about twenty-six and twenty-one, respectively, and aside from the fact that they were continually laughing and chuckling, they were as unlike as any two sisters could be. Rangi, whose name means *Heaven*, was a

dark and strongly made girl, with pronounced Maori features — heavy straight nose and a firm chin, dark and rather sleepy eyes. Her voice was deep, and when she chuckled, which was almost always, it came from deep in her throat.

Miria, and her name means *Comfort*, was the opposite of her sister in every way save disposition, for where Rangi was dark, she was light, almost ivory skinned; where Rangi was strongly made, she was slender and graceful. A pretty girl, too, for her features were fine, like her mother's, and her eyes were bright, and in the center of her forehead there was a small, deep, triangular scar that set off the symmetry of her features as does the caste mark on a Hindu face. Her voice was light and musical, and she could laugh and talk at the same time.

The three of them lived alone, save for little Aroha, for the father had died many years before, and Hopaea had never remarried. And it was a happy household, for not once, during the innumerable visits I made there, did I hear a word spoken in anger. There was an air of peace and comfort and friendliness about the house that was almost tangible.

Finally the word came through to us, and late one morning I glanced around my empty hut, slung my pack on my shoulders, and marched my group down to the waiting troop train. It was a bright, warm day,



and the odor of gorse was heavy about the low-lying railway tracks. I didn't look back at the camp, for I had grown attached to the high glen that ran back up into the hills, and the strange improbable trees and ferns that bordered the little stream running through it. It was a relief when we were on the way, and a bigger relief when I had the detail aboard ship and assigned to quarters. And then, as I stood by the rail and looked across the docks to the hills that wall in the jumbled and irregular streets of Wellington, I felt a tremendous urge to see Otaki once more and say goodbye to it.

In ways known only to Marines, I acquired the services of a jeep, and late in the afternoon I was again in Otaki, looking for Rangi and Miria in the town. When I found them, they embraced me in one huge and laughing armful, and no one on all the crowded street thought it queer, for it was Christmas Eve, and everyone was greeting everyone else, friend and stranger alike.

We went home, and relatives and friends came in, and they danced and sang for me, and the evening went by too quickly. I got up, shook hands with some and embraced others, and started for the door. Suddenly I was gripped and held, port and starboard, by Weno and Hinehou — something dropped down before my face and fell against my chest, and I could

hear Rangi chuckle as she fumbled with something at my nape.

Then I was free again, and I glanced down and saw what it was that had been tied on me — a tiny figure of *pounamu*, the local jade, carved in the crude likeness of a human foetus, a *hei tiki*. Then I broke away and went to the jeep, and the crowd came with me, and instead of saying goodbye or cheer-o, they said "*Haere ra*" and I liked them for it, for it means, "Go, then." It is the real Maori farewell, and there is a strength to it, it seems to say that if one must go, he must go, and why hold him back or make it difficult for him? And the answer to it is "*E noho ra*," and it means "Stay here."

So I said, "*E noho ra*" and I was about to go, when there was a minor commotion, and through the circle burst little Aroha in an inadequate night dress. She ran up, threw her arms around me and kissed me, and then ran back the way she came, without a word, and I drove off, to the city and the dock and the ship.



## EACH of the two main islands

of New Zealand, which the English, with characteristic simplicity and lack of poetic feeling named North Island and South Island, has a native name. Each name is many centuries old, and each of them tells something of the history of the land. The South Island, for instance, is Te Wai Pounamu, Greenstone Water, for it was in streams on the west coast of the south, where the steep and rugged terrain makes travel even today a difficult and hazardous task, that the great outcroppings of that lovely stone occurred. The ancient travelers from the eastern islands came across it and learned to treasure it for its beauty and its usefulness in the making of ornaments and weapons.

The North Island's native name is even more musical, and the picture it conjures up is one of epic trips across great and uncharted stretches of ocean, trips accomplished in huge dugout canoes paddled and sailed by a sturdy and self-reliant people. It calls up a vicarious thrill, also, for it tells, in its few syllables, something of the feelings of the travelers when, after

weeks and sometimes months of monotonous and dangerous travel, they saw the first indication of their goal, far out on the southwestern horizon. For the name is Aotea-roa, and it means the Long White Cloud. The tale is that always, above the island, lies a long narrow white cloud that can be seen long before the land itself is above the horizon.

These tales came to my mind as I leaned on the port rail of a small transport one morning in February. The restless Tasman Sea stretched away before me under a pale sky, and the bow of the ship cut straight into the path of the sun. Far off, and not quite abeam to port, I could see a long, narrow cloud, motionless and low on the horizon, and I knew that somewhere under it were the rugged dark hills of New Zealand, and that in the valleys and plains that lay around the skirts of these hills lived my friends. I knew that when I landed I would see them and be welcomed in the same spirit and in much the same way in which the old canoe voyagers were welcomed — there would be food and a place to rest, and the women would cry a little and the men would be calm and quiet and hospitable. And in a few days the discomforts and dangers of the past months would become vague, uneasy dreams and would fade away in the gentle, quiet peacefulness that surrounds the Maori home. So there was no impatience in

me as I stood and gazed out across the choppy grey sea.

Soon I could see a vague, dark knob under the cloud, the peak of one of the hills — and then, as though the land were as anxious to welcome me as I was to see it, other hills pushed up from the horizon, and I knew that the end of the trip was in sight. Kapiti Island lay dead abeam to port now, and off to starboard I could see the jagged outline of the northernmost extremity of Te Wai Pounamu. I tried to persuade myself that I could see the beach at Otaki and at Paraparaumu. We nosed into the Straits and into the harbor, and the strange, friendly old city of Wellington lay before me, ringed and protected by its rugged hills. And as we edged up to the Aotea Quay, I could see a little train disappear into the side of a cliff, into the tunnel that would disgorge it near Tawa Flat, well on the way to Paekakariki.

We docked, and the heartbreaking job of unloading began, with the word that there would be no liberty until the holds were cleared. The booms swung, and the officers swore, and the men sweated, and the holds gave up their stores, and at noon the next day I went below, inspected the empty spaces, and dismissed my men. There was a truck just leaving the dock, bound for the camp, and as it pulled out of the gateway, I was beside the driver.

## 2

The road from Wellington to Auckland follows the shore line of the upper harbor for several miles, past a few small stations with picturesque names. There is Karori, which is not a Maori word, and there is Ngahauranga, which is. It seems to have something to do with the landing of canoes, and a little farther up there is Petone, *pito-one*, the "end of the beaches." All the country round about Wellington is rich with memories of the first comers to the land. Their names and the names of their villages are so universally used throughout the country that now and again, when a European place name is encountered, it seems outlandish and out of place.

Several miles up from Wellington the road branches, and two routes are open to the driver. One of these follows the Hutt River for several more miles and then cuts off to the left across the hills toward the west coast. It is steep, at first, and winds around the edge of the abrupt hills above the Hutt, but after a mile or so, it picks up a small glen and follows that, beside a fast, clear stream. Over the watershed, another stream guides it to the head of the bay that comes in past Porirua and Paremata, farther to the south, toward the Straits. Around the headwaters of the bay, a third stream, a broad, swift burn flowing

over a gravelly bed through rich looking pasture land into the bay, leads back into the sharp, high ridge that separates the head of the bay from the coastal plain above Paekakariki.

For a short way from the bay the pasture land stretches wide to each side, and the farms are neat and well fenced. The country rolls slightly, and in the draws and shallow ravines the *manuka* grows dense and velvety and dark, and it is shaped by the prevailing winds to the contour of the hill. The hills nearby are bare of all but turf, and they are dotted with sheep. Here and there rises a huge, blackened stump, a relic of the days when the turf was hidden under the dense, lush bush, and now and again the sheep grazed around the rotting trunk of some huge old tree.

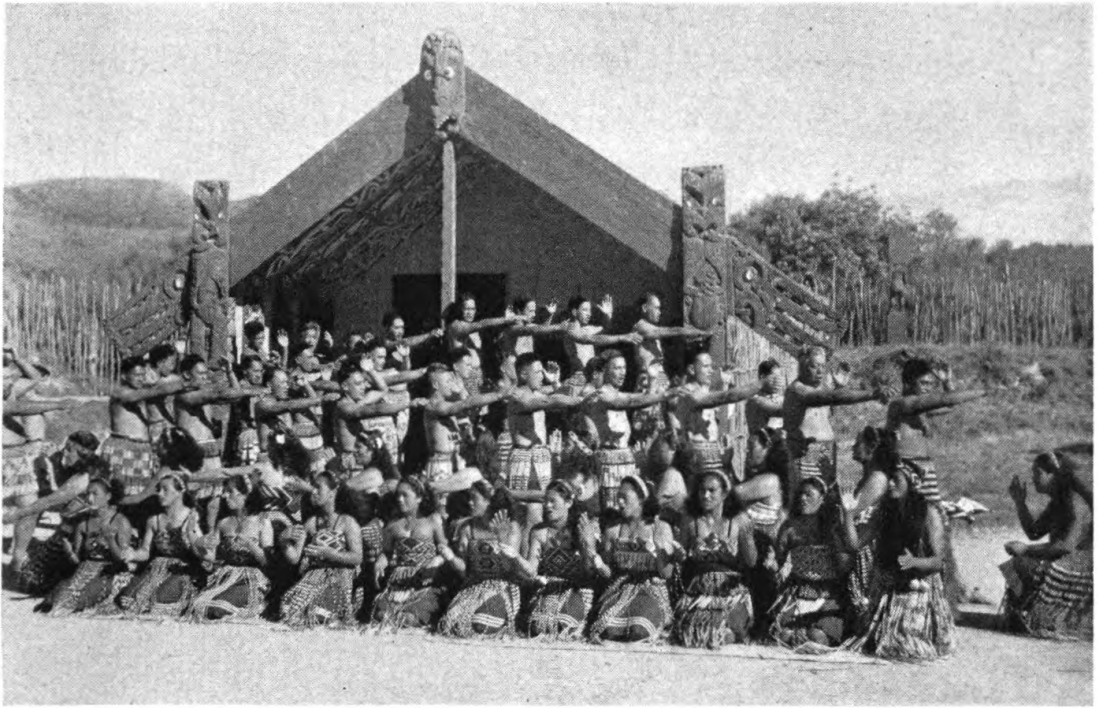
Gradually the low hills to each side draw closer, and their slope becomes more abrupt. The sheep travel along an intricate tracery of tiny paths of their own making, and the ravines grow deeper. The stream beside the road flows now on a rocky bed, and there are rapids and small cascades, and now and then, in one of the glens, there is the prehistoric shape of a huge tree fern, a *punga*. The farms are smaller and more compact, and often they stand in groves of macrocarpa evergreen.

Finally the road slants downward into a dark and

deep canyon whose nearly sheer sides are untouched by sun, damp and covered with a lush growth of ferns. The *punga* is here in force, and the graceful fronds and dark, strong trunks give a weird, fantastic look to the whole landscape. There are many springs, and the grey rock outcroppings are damp with the flow of the water that feeds the rushing, roaring stream beside the road.

It was over this route that the truck bore me toward Paekakariki and camp and Otaki. I lay back against the seat, with the window down, letting the soft afternoon air blow in on me, heavy, now and again, with the scent of the gorse that was yellowing the side of the hills. The mental and emotional strains of the past two months, unnoticed though they may have been at the time they came upon me, gradually relaxed and slipped away, and as they faded, they left me in a strangely perceptive mood — a mood in which it seemed as though the power to see everything with unnatural clarity was upon me, and that my emotions were sharpened and made more sensitive. The beauty of the whole landscape, bathed as it was in a soft, crystal clear afternoon sun, struck me with peculiar force, although I had always, from first sight, loved it. And the thought of my friends at Otaki — of Weno and Hopaea and Miria, and of little





*Maori Action Song*



*Kia-kaha—Maori haka war dance*



The truck slipped down the narrow, deep gorge, and once more the wild loveliness of the place, and its strangeness, reached out and caught me. The huge *pungas*, even, had a strange and grotesquely familiar and friendly look, as might a pet dinosaur, or a caged pterodactyl. The conceit made me smile, and then, as it always did, the strangest part of the ride caught and held my eye.

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The road comes out just under the crest of the hill, and above, to the right, there is a short bulge of earth and rock that sweeps back out of sight. To the left the land drops away, sharply, and falls almost sheer to the railway and the highway, hundreds of feet below. It is not quite a cliff, but the solid rocky spine of the hills is so solid, and the loose rock so rare, that there is little detritus, and a landslide is a rare thing. The slope is steep and violent, and the shrubs and small trees that grow on it seem to grow outward before they grow up, and it seemed also as though I could leap outward and land on the beach in one clean jump.

From Pukerua, off to the left, to the headlands far beyond Otaki, there is one long, unbroken, concave sweep of shoreline, and so close are we to it, and so high above it, that it seems to curve almost underfoot, and the currents and the tidal flow can be seen clearly in the varying shades of green that swirl and change and recede beyond the wavering, flowing lines of the surf. Directly below, the shore is rocky, and even from this height I can see the white foam fly into the air over the sea wall that protects the highway, for there is a stiff, steady breeze coming across from the rocky

tip of the South Island, far off ahead of me, plainly visible in the clear, sunny air.

Somewhat to the right, and perhaps a dozen air-miles away, Kapiti Island appears to float, its regular, peaked outline capped by a small cloud, the only one visible in the neighborhood. The Maori people of the district can tell the coming weather by the appearance of Kapiti, and they explained it to me often, but it is a mystery, apparently, that I am not meant to understand, for while I tried, many times, to follow their directions, my small successes were obviously luck only, until finally I hit upon a safe and sure method of my own — I would invariably predict rain, and most of the time I would be right. But they considered this to be mere amateur work — I could not predict the force and the direction of the wind, nor could I tell at what hour the rains would begin.

Years ago, a century and more, in fact, Kapiti Island was a place of importance to the Maoris of the district, for it was from there that Te Rauparaha and his Raukawa tribesmen set out on their forays against the South Island tribes. It was a stronghold, likewise, an easily defended place, and it is likely that there was, at one time, a *pa*, a hilltop fortress there. Nowadays the whole island, which is some three miles long, is a bird sanctuary and a paradise for naturalists. There is a rumor to the effect that the remains of the

old marauder himself, Te Rauparaha, lie hidden in one of the curious, conical rocks at the southern end of the island.

Directly below us, as tiny as a village in an old-time Christmas garden, lies Paekakariki, and the young driver and I climb back into the cab to begin the long and winding descent. The road follows the face of the hill, curving in and out of the short, abrupt draws. I can feel the difference in the air pressure as we go down. Finally we are on the highway, going past the little station at Paekakariki, past the switching yards with the diminutive trains waiting for the time to depart for Wellington, past the little rural school, and into our camp.

### 3

A quick bath from a bucket, clean khaki, and a quick cup of coffee in the galley — and then the highway again, with the roar of the breakers away to my left, the beautiful hills at my right, and the sun in my face. No truck, no jeep, and no more trains until the next day, but Otaki is only twenty miles off, and the air is soft and cool and quiet, and I am absolutely and utterly free and alone, which, for the service man, is saying that I am knocking at the gates of Paradise. I walk along at a good clip, and what I see — the hills and the vivid meadows, and the sheep in them — all

People are kind in New Zealand, and in their kindness they refuse to allow me to walk — a short ride of a mile or two is followed by several more, and finally we cross the Otaki River. At the far end of the old wooden bridge, in a corner of a meadow, there is a tea room, a charming thing, made from an old, well-built stable. It is painted a warm green that harmonizes with the color of the fields around it, and the garden, the paths, and even the cow near by have a well-scrubbed look. I know it, and the food it offers, well, and now is a chance to find out whether I'll be remembered. I am.

I never found out who the old gentleman was, but that did nothing to cloud the moment. It is good to be remembered, and it is also good to realize that something that has been remembered as good turns out to

be as good as anticipated. Such as the tea, and the scones, and the butter.

The highway and the railroad, side by side, run between the village and the foot of the first line of low hills, inland perhaps two miles from the main part of the town. The first road to the left, the Wae-renga Road, goes past Dick's home, and I stop for a moment, to say hello, and then on down the road toward the center of town, to Rangatira Street, and to the bungalow at the end of it. The sun is low, now, and all colors are soft and rich with its softened light — even the brilliant green of the paddocks has taken on a golden tint, and the garden behind the neat box-wood hedge is as bright and mellow as old stained glass.

The door is closed, but I know from beforehand that it is not locked, and I knock, wondering as I do whether the welcome I shall get will compare well with the feelings of my heart. The door opens quickly, and there, before me, stands little Aroha. Not so little now, for the child has begun to shoot up like a weed, and there is a changed, softened look in her eyes. She glances at me for a moment and turns away.

"Oh, Auntie! Auntie, Uncle Zimmie's come home!"





## 4

The rest of that evening is before me now, as I write, and every detail of it stands out fresh and clear, for everything that happened seemed to follow a pattern, a well planned, gentle design in which every word and action and gesture fits perfectly into what preceded and followed.

Hopaea came from the kitchen and threw her arms around me, and I remember thinking that she was a strong little person, for her slender arms were firm and muscular, and it seemed as though I would never get free — and behind her were Rangi and Miria and Aroha's mother, Hinehou, her handsome, somber face lit up, for once, with a broad and happy smile. It was she who noticed that I was tired, for weariness had come to me all at once, and taking me by both arms she pushed me, in spite of my protests, into the little spare bedroom and onto the bed, where she removed my shoes and threw a comforter over me and told me to rest for a few minutes.

A fumbling at the door wakened me, and a glance at the dark window told me that I had done more than rest for a few minutes. And Aroha came in carefully, her face a study in serious concentration as she balanced a well laden tea tray and carried it to the bed.

“And Auntie says that you are not to get up yet.

She says that you are to rest for a while," and having delivered the food and the dicta, she went out.

It was Friday, and there was the usual dance for our men, and under the circumstances it took on the air of a homecoming. We were welcomed in royal style, and we danced half the night and sat up the rest of it talking, and finally, when Cy Sheehan and I got back to camp, it was broad daylight. We separated at the gate, and I set a straight course for the galley and coffee. A large and homely corporal, rough and efficient-looking in battered dungarees, was standing at a corner of the company street, and as I came past him, his hand flashed up in a perfect salute. But instead of the usual greeting of "Good morning, sir," strange words came from his lips.

"Good morning, Uncle Zimmie," he said, and I had to work hard to keep a grin from my face. He, too, had been to Otaki.

## 5

The "Uncle Zimmie" tag that was pinned on me by little Aroha was too good to keep quiet, of course, and soon the whole town of Otaki knew it. Never did a man's family grow faster, I think, than did mine, nor did any man have a more interesting one — for soon Hopaea, who had grown-up children of her own, discarded the formal "Captain" for the more intimate

“Uncle.” And so also did Hinehou, her sister, and all the rest of the clan. Where I went in the town I was greeted so, and I never tired of it.

Hinehou had several children, including a newly married son Roi, whose marriage had a pleasant tinge of romance to it. Some years before he had been forced to spend some months in a hospital away from home, and during the months away, he fell in love with, and married, the nurse, a pretty, sweet-faced Maori girl from beyond the Rimutaka mountains. They lived in a small cabin not far from the Te Hana home, and nearly always, when I dropped in, Lena would be in the kitchen with Hopaea, and I would sit and listen to them chatter, and wonder at how attractive the human lips can be when they habitually turn up at the corners.

Another of Hinehou's daughters was one of my most attractive nieces — and she, like her courtesy uncle, was in the armed forces, for she was one of a fairly good-sized group of young Maori girls who had formed a WAAC detachment in the early days of the war. She and four or five others from Otaki, together with perhaps a dozen more from the surrounding territory, were stationed at an artillery encampment on the road to Wellington. They were real soldiers, too, for I was told that they manned the guns and did communication work for the gun crews as though they

Often, when I was on my way in to Wellington on leave, Ria, my niece, and several of her friends, would board the same train with the same idea in mind, and it came to be a sort of general understanding among them that in case any of them met or saw me, the whole group would be my guests at tea, for the train arrived at about the hour that the New Zealander considers sacred to the drinking of tea. These meetings were always pleasant, and always I came away from them with some new thing learned. Once, in particular, the outcome was interesting because of the insight it gave me into one of the problems of the Maori today.

## 6

I had met Tilden Walker several times, and I remembered her well, for she was small, slender, and extremely pretty, and I think that she was probably about one-fourth Pakeha. At any rate, she came from a district in which there were very few Maoris, and her whole life had been spent among Pakeha friends. Also, I gathered that her parents had no interest in the traditional things, and the result was that when Tiri, as she was called, joined the WAAC's and came

to Paremata, she found that she was less Maori than many of her friends, some of whom were more Pakeha by blood than she. Immediately she came in, however, something within her made her incline to the *maori-tanga* of her companions, and I believe it was at her request that the girls began to speak only Maori in their free hours and at meals, and it is certain that she set about to become most Maori of the lot. It was as though she wished to make up for years of neglect of part of her racial rights, and she applied herself to the learning of everything that could be learned. She even told me, once, that when she left the service, she thought she would have a *moko* applied to her chin, the delicate black scrollwork tattooing that one sees so often on the faces of the older women. It is going out of fashion now, but sometimes, in the outlying sections, one sees a young woman with it, and in some queer way it adds greatly to the dignity of the girl, and is not in any way grotesque, for the artist fits the pattern to the shape of the features, accentuating a good feature, strengthening a weak one. And one day Tiri will wear one, and I think she will wear it well.

One day she and Ruta Ransfield, a sturdy, self-reliant girl from Otaki, got aboard the train, and in accordance with tradition I said "*Nau mai*" and claimed the right of being host. During the meal, the

talk turned, as it always did, to things Maori, and Tiri told us of a custom of which she had once heard.

“. . . and she told me that when you go to a strange *pa*, and have your first meal on the *marae*, you must always drop a bit of the food on the ground — quietly, so that no one sees it. I don't know why that's done, but it's the custom — ,” said Tiri.

We got up to leave, and as we struggled into our raincoats, Ruta nudged me very gently and motioned with her head toward the table. There, under Tiri's chair, was a little crust of bread. Tiri was looking the other way, and I glanced at Ruta, who smiled faintly at me. I think she felt as I did just at the moment, rather touched by the earnestness with which Tiri was recovering her lost *maoritanga*.

## 7

The routine of our life, at that time, permitted a great deal of liberty in the evenings, and it gradually came about that a small group of us, officers and enlisted men alike, made Otaki our headquarters, and most of us who went there were taken under the wing of some particular family. And between all the members of this group there grew up a certain unofficial and unmilitary feeling of camaraderie, a community of feeling, that knit us into a compact group far more closely than a strictly military companionship could

have done. We knew each other well, and when we met, away from the town, matters of local interest would be discussed with as much enthusiasm as though we were, indeed, of the town.

Some of the men whom I grew to know and like of this group were of the Transport Company, and they were welcome members of the club, for theirs was the organization that had control of the jeeps, those indispensable adjuncts to our comfort. The last train for Otaki from Paekakariki left late in the afternoon, which sometimes made it difficult for us to catch it, and the ability to get a jeep, under those circumstances, made all the difference between staying in camp or getting to Otaki and back.

There was Dave, for instance, a corporal in the Transport Company, whose clownish good nature and vast capacity for beer made him a welcome guest at the various small pubs. He was a large, good humored boy, with the beginnings of what would later become a Falstaffian figure — and his humor, indeed, ran on somewhat the same lines. He would drive several of us out to the town, park the jeep in some easily accessible place, and make for the nearest bar, while the rest of us would scatter to the various homes where we visited, after agreeing on a time for return. Always, as the time approached for the trip back to camp, we would have to use persuasion to pry Dave loose

from the mahogany, and once, I recall, I had to do the driving, while Dave rested, alcoholically, in the back seat.

And there was Charlie, a tall, lean, saturnine youngster from somewhere in the deep South — he used to come with me to the house on Rangatira Street, and he was welcome, for his talent lay in telling tall tales, a talent well liked by the Maoris, who themselves are no mean exponents of the art. But Charlie would tell his tales in a sad, level voice, quietly, with no gestures, and this, together with the fact that the tales themselves were so outrageous, won the Maoris to him from the first.

But my favorite of the entire group was a young corporal from an engineering outfit, a huge, quiet, slow youngster, who came from a midwestern farm. He and I must have begun calling on the Te Hana family at about the same time, for I can hardly recall a single trip there when I did not see Frank sitting, quiet and massive, in a corner of the living room. There was a restfulness about his silence, and a promise to it that, if anything important occurred to him, he would speak. He was ruddy with health, and there was an odd sort of dignity about him, an air of responsibility that made him seem far more mature than his years warranted.

It was easy and simple and natural to fall into the



way of life at the Te Hana home, for the life itself was exactly that — easy and simple and natural, and each task that went to make up the routine of the day was finished as casually as the taking of a breath. There was no hurry and no haste, and never did I hear a word of complaint.

I recall, for instance, awakening one morning in the little spare bedroom — awakening after my first overnight stay. It was early, but the sun was up, and the air that came through the window was sharp with the frost of late fall. As I lay quiet, listening for sounds of life in the rest of the house, I heard a peculiar scurrying sound in the living room, and then Miria's giggling and Rangi's deep chuckle. I got up, threw on some clothes, and crept to the door to peer into the room.

The furniture had been shifted and crowded against one wall, and the rug was rolled away, and off in the corner Rangi was on her hands and knees, applying wax with a cloth to the dark old floor. Behind her, and attending to the polishing, was Miria, and when I realized what method she was using, my shout of laughter startled poor Rangi into rolling over backward. For Miria had taken two large pieces of sheep skin and had tied them onto her feet, and she was skating back and forth in imitation of the performers she had seen in the movies, leaving a fine

hard gloss on the floor as she did so. And at last I understood how it was that the dark wood of the threshold always seemed to me to have been covered with a thick transparent film — the polishing rite was one that was carried out several times a week, and every floor in the house was involved.

## 8

Sometimes I wish that I had taken notes on the many things that I heard from Hopaea. For Hopaea was Maori of the Maori, and she recognized and was proud of her heritage. I have sat with her for hours on end and listened as I watched her small, slender hands while she knitted or made belts or wallets of *taniko* work. She was never idle, and as she worked, she would talk steadily in her low, quiet voice that had just the faintest shade of a lilt, and an elusive richening of the vowel sounds to indicate that English was her second tongue. And now and again, when I had begun to make some progress in the language, she would slip for an instant or two into her own tongue, and I would listen carefully to the rich, musical, sonorous words. She explained to me the complicated and expressive uses of the dual and plural pronouns, and of the strange words of direction that the Maori still uses and which show that for countless generations he has been an island dweller.

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In one corner of the garden grew a huge plant of *harakeke*, New Zealand flax, and once, when I asked her some simple question about the old way of preparing it, she sent me out to cut some of the six-foot leaves. And then she sat by me and explained each of the many careful steps in separating the long silky fibers from the flesh of the leaf, making me carry out her explanations as she talked, and I recall the childish pride I felt when, in place of the long, stiff, rush-like leaves, I held in my hand a wisp of shimmering, flossy fibers that were clean and white and tough. Then she explained to me how there were many types of flax, and that each type was useful for a particular kind of textile, depending upon its fineness or its strength or its gloss. She showed me, too, how to make the little baskets called *konaē* that are used to hold the food that is put into the earth ovens to be cooked by the heat of hot rocks, and how to do the peculiar knotted weaving that was used, in the old days, in the making of the lovely old *kiwi* feather cloaks.

One evening it occurred to me that I could reciprocate, and I picked up a piece of string and began idly, without saying a word, to build a two strand chain stitch on my forefingers. Soon I noticed that she had stopped knitting and had fallen silent, and that she was watching my fingers as intently as I had watched hers. She asked me to show her, and I took her hands,

as she had taken mine, and I guided them in the complicated pattern. Then I sat back and watched her as she concentrated upon learning it as though it were the most important thing in the world, and as I watched her intent, dark, lean face and the thick, iron grey mass of hair above it, it came to me again what a lovely and lovable person Hopaea was. She laughed, and tossed me a small finished length of the plait and clapped her hands, proud and happy as a youngster — just as I had been when she taught me.

A good bit of the life of the house centered, of course, in the kitchen, a large room at the back of the house. In a niche in the north wall there was a built-in brick and cast iron stove with a tiny fire box. It was neatly painted, red for the brick and black for the iron, and the way Hopaea and the two girls could control the heat of the tiny wood fire seemed a miracle to me, who was used to gas and electricity. The only thing about the kitchen that was modern was an ancient, but efficient, electric toaster, but it seemed to me that never before had I tasted food that was better than the meals that we had there before the fire. It was always simple food, but the eggs were sometimes still warm from the hen when Hopaea cooked them, and the bread was solid and crusty and substantial, and almost always there was *puha*, a green, leafy weed that grows in profusion over the whole countryside,

along the fences and the hedgerows. It is used as we use spinach, and there is a faint pungency to it that is indescribable and unmistakable. And tea, strong and hot. Tea, by the way, gave rise to the most embarrassing moment I experienced there.

It must have been a month or so after I began visiting them that it dawned on me that I had been drinking up the precious supply of tea that they had accumulated in spite of the severe rationing. Tea to them is like coffee to an American, and I kicked myself, mentally, for having been so thoughtless, and, while kicking, I hurried off to our mess sergeant. A cooperative soul, he, for when I had explained my sudden desire for a quantity of bulk tea, he rushed off and came back with a small carton containing three pounds of it. He had even sifted it, so that no dust remained in it to cloud the brew — and, feeling smug and virtuous, I hightailed off to Otaki, bearing gifts. I handed it to Hopaea.

Her face went blank, and I thought for a moment that she was going to be angry, but she became quiet and reticent, and I was puzzled and worried, for I knew that I had blundered in some way. Then, again, in a flash, I saw that I had really put my foot through a custom, for I had offended her in the Maori's most sensitive spot, her idea of hospitality.

When I had once realized and shown that I was

But to return to the kitchen and to the cooking. One Saturday afternoon, when I came into the house and had been embraced by Hopaea, I noticed and remarked about a strange, pungent odor, a piercing, appetizing smell that seemed to come from the kitchen. And Miria, off in a corner, bubbled with laughter and said that they had decided to make a real Maori of me by feeding me *titi*. And when I asked what in Tophet *titi* might be, she and her mother laughed again and told me to wait. I waited.

gives up a part of its fat and the paper becomes soaked with the oil. The method of cooking it is to boil it with *puha*, and the resulting dish, while a little wild in taste, is well worth eating. For the meat of the bird, which is about the size of a pigeon, is fine and tender and faintly flavored with the fish and shell-fish which the bird eats. From the discussion of *titi* the talk went naturally to other items of the diet, and Hopaea told me many of the things that her ancestors had used — the birds and the nuts and berries and the fernroot that was a staple article of diet for the inland and the mountain people. One thing she told me came in handy some time later.

One day Don Jackson, the leader of our section, was told that we were to take our men, about twenty of them, hike back into the hills, and bivouac. We were to leave the next morning at eight, stay thirty-six hours, and we were to take no food. Now since the country into which we were going was as wild as the day it rose from the sea, this was equivalent to saying that we and our twenty men were to go without food for a day and a half merely for the sake of going hungry. He and I talked it over at length, and we tried and tried, with no success whatever, to understand the workings of the mind of a commanding officer who would cause his men to suffer for the sake of suffering and with no other discernible object in view —

but the matter was utterly beyond anything that our junior rank minds could understand, and we gave it up.

The next morning we set out, and a four-hour hike got us to our objective, a high saddle in the hills, where a meadow lay in the midst of the primeval bush. There was a fast, clear stream at one corner, and flanking the stream was a grove of the great *punga* trees that have such a weird, unearthly look. We camped, and when the evening came, my belly within me was roaring with rage at my neglect. I suddenly recalled my talk with Hopaea. The *punga*, where the crown tops the trunk and the huge fronds spring out, is covered with a mass of brown silky fur, and in this mass are numerous small knobs, like clenched fingers, the buds of new fronds that were beginning to form. I picked a helmet full of them and buried them in the coals to roast, and when I brought them out, they were like Spanish chestnuts. Don, who was ultraconservative in the matter of food, would have none of them, but I ate them and enjoyed them, and as the roaring within me quieted to a purr of contentment, I blessed the memory of Hopaea.

9

When I had been only a few weeks back from the fighting in the islands and just as I was falling into

the easy pace of training and relaxation, when life was being arranged in a rhythmic, pleasant pattern, the word was given me that I, with a few of my men, was to go northward again for a few weeks on special duty. It had nothing to do with active service, and ordinarily I should have welcomed the chance to see a new land and a new people, but my heart had gone out to my new friends to such an extent that the thought of leaving them was like the thought of leaving home. I asked for, and received, permission to go into the country and stay until it was time for me to leave.

Many and many a time Hinehou, the mother of little Aroha, had asked me to come to her home, a few miles out of Otaki, to visit her and Maunga, her great, placid husband, and always I had had to put it off, for the trip had to be made afoot or by horseback, and never had I had time to go. But now, with a day or so of absolute freedom, I decided to accept her standing invitation. I spent the night in the little bedroom that had been assigned to me, and early the next morning, the four of us, Hinehou, Miria, Rangi, and I set out. The three women rode a small buckboard, but I, longing for exercise, took the saddle horse and dashed on ahead, down the lane and along the road past the old church and out into the sand dunes.

It was a clear, cool day in the early fall, and the chill of the shade disappeared in the warmth of the sunlight as I followed the faint path across the meadows and into the rolling hills. There was a late blooming of gorse, and the scent of the yellow blossoms lay thick and heady in the hollows. The *manuka*, that feathery and tough-stemmed shrub that fills the draws with its dark and velvety foliage, was still speckled with the tiny white blossoms that Weno, who was a poet, called *nga whetu o te manuka* — the little stars of the *manuka*. The low hills were alive with rabbits, and now and again, standing a bit aloof from the common herd, could be seen a great hare, with the sun shining through his ears and turning them pink. Sheep grazed quietly, and as I passed they paused in their chewing and looked benignly at me. The ancient peace of the countryside lay over it and over me like a summer mist, and I went slowly and quietly, to savor it as long as I could, and it seemed to me as though the young horse that carried me felt as I did, for he moved with an effortless grace that was as smooth and as soothing as the rippling of silk.

The hills grew higher and steeper as we came near the farm, and the pathway led through a narrow and winding ravine. There were no trees, but the turf was thick and close cropped and as green as emerald, and the gorse and the *manuka* grew over it singly

and in clumps, and the little stretches of turf that lay between them were like the aisles of a forest. The sand of the road was clean and yellow, and now and again, when there had been a break in the turf and the effects of erosion had begun to show, bare sand dunes had begun to form, and their smooth wind-carved shapes rose against the sky in strange contrast to the green of the turf about them.

At last there was a sharp bend in the road, and beyond the bend a little cup-shaped valley opened out, and in the bottom of the cup was a small rise beside the road. Maunga and Hinehou lived in the little cottage whose roof I could just see above the palisade-like fence of woven *manuka* twigs. I dismounted and unsaddled the horse and sat down on the sunny side of the fence to wait for the others.

It was the same here as it had been on the road. Across the little valley, a hundred yards away, the cottontails were scurrying around under the gorse — the hillside was alive with them. In the bottom land, tufts of *wiwi*, a coarse, tough-stemmed swamp grass, stood out in rich contrast to the grass, for it was a deep, warm chocolate brown, and while the turf beside it was clipped close to the roots by the persistent sheep, the *wiwi* itself was untouched, as though it had been so arranged by a landscape gardener.

We ate lunch with Hinehou, and then we looked

over the livestock and the dairy shed and the poultry, for Maunga was an energetic and hardworking man. His buildings are clean and well kept, and the very earth of the yard and the garden looked as though it had been swept. And the inside of the cottage was clean and polished and neat — we had left our shoes at the doorstep as we came in, so as not to track in the mud and the dirt and the sand, and I wondered, as I kicked mine off, why we didn't follow the same comfortable and cleanly custom at home.

Then we grew drowsy from the fresh air and the food and the warmth of the sun, and Rangi and I and Miria took a blanket out to the turf on the sunny hillside, and lay there together until we fell asleep. Two musical sounds awakened me, and I rolled over sleepily to find out what they were. It was simple. Rangi was snoring, softly and contentedly, and Miria was giggling at the sound.

The sun was down, and suddenly it was chilly, and we went indoors. The kettle was on, and the candles were lit, and the table was set, and around it, waiting for us, was the rest of the family. Maunga and Hinehou and their son Roiri, the latter's wife Lena, and little Aroha made a handsome group sitting there in the deepening shadows, for the dark, ruddy faces and the dark, somber eyes glowed in the soft light of the candles against a background of dark brown polished

wood. Now and again I could see a flash of white as Maunga smiled or laughed in his low-pitched deep-toned way, and once again I was fascinated by the beauty of Lena's expression. Her face was strong, but with the strength there was a sweetness in the look of her eyes and in the way her lips curled at the corner that complemented the more delicate beauty of Roi-ri's face. They were expecting a child the following spring, in September.

The meal passed quickly, all too quickly, for the novelty of the company and the food and the surroundings entranced me. The fare was simple, but Hinehou had added a dish to the others that delighted me by its simplicity and goodness. For to season the large lump of home cured corned beef, she had picked a heap of the tender end-shoots of a squash vine and had boiled them as she would *puha* — and the result was *kamokamo*, and it was good.

We sat and talked, afterward, by the light of the fire in the living room, and as I was beginning to think of bed, there was a familiar sound in the yard, at which my heart fell. It was a jeep, and in it, come to recall me to camp, was my huge, rosy cheeked top sergeant. My ship was in, and I was to go aboard early the next morning.

After my return from Noumea, I settled back quickly into the humdrum routine of camp life and

in an atmosphere of peace and quietness and friendship, I enjoyed my days in Otaki, where, as the time passed, the town and the people and the surrounding country became as dear to me as any place or people in the world. Those of the Maori community whom at first I knew but casually began to take on clear cut outlines of close friends, while in the Te Hana home I came as nearly being one of the family itself as was possible. In my odd-hour comings and goings, I was accepted as casually as though I had been an older brother, and now and again Hopaea would scold me as she would a child. It was an understood thing that the little bedroom off the central hall was mine whenever it was possible for me to stay, and it was an understood fact, too, that I was to tuck little Aroha in when she had been driven to her bunk during the early part of the evening.

It was inevitable, I think that the spectacle of such matter-of-fact and unostentatious interracial good feeling should have caused me to think of the contrasting state of affairs in my own country. I thought long and deeply about it, for the problems connected with the minority group question in the United States had held my interest since my early high school years.

The first, and the obvious, conclusion to which I came was that if such a satisfactory condition existed in one country, there was no good reason why a com-

parable condition should not exist in another. There were in New Zealand a dark race and a white race, the latter outnumbered the former and controlled the country, and yet the two races lived in entire harmony. If such a thing existed in New Zealand, it could exist in my own land. And since it did not exist there, some fault must lie in the white race of my own land, some deeply buried lack of proper understanding of the minority Negro group.

That was an easy conclusion to reach — far too easy indeed, but it seemed to be justified by what I saw in the early days of my stay. Little by little, however, I sensed rather than saw that the situation was not as simple as it had at first appeared. This sensing of a difference began, I think, when I noticed that among the innumerable Marines who were fraternizing with the native population and visiting them and sleeping with them with every sign of enthusiastic enjoyment was a large number of Southerners of that class which is admittedly the most hidebound in the country in the matter of the color line.

These lads, whose hackles would have risen like the quills of a porcupine at the mention of any kind of social intercourse with a person darker than a sun-burned Italian, and who would have screamed and beat their breasts at the merest hint of miscegenation, were now wholeheartedly engaging in the one and at

least thinking seriously of the other. It began to be apparent to me that there was no inherent distaste toward a darker skin or toward a culturally different background. And from that the conclusion seemed to be inescapable that there must, therefore, be a fundamental difference in the other people.

There was a difference, of course, but what it was and how fundamental was its nature I did not come to realize until many months later. Each event, of course, helped sort out the myriad details which filled my mind, and each conversation I held did its bit toward helping me to arrive at an understanding of what those details really portrayed. And while many months were to elapse before the picture was complete, I did succeed in getting to know something of the Maori, as he had been, and something of the history of his relationship with the Pakeha.

At the end of the 19th Century, the once proud and numerous Maori population of New Zealand had fallen to a low level. The century had been a momentous and a tragic one for them, for it had seen the coming of great tribal wars and the coming of the white man. It had seen the implanting of an alien culture upon the indigenous culture. It had seen new and strange rites replace the older and richer and more complicated system of *tapu*; an alien tongue had come to edge out the sonorous and expressive language of

the ancestors, *te reo a nga tupuna*. And it had seen deadly and accurate weapons replace the clubs and the staves with which the Maori had delighted to pit himself in hand to hand fight with his enemy.

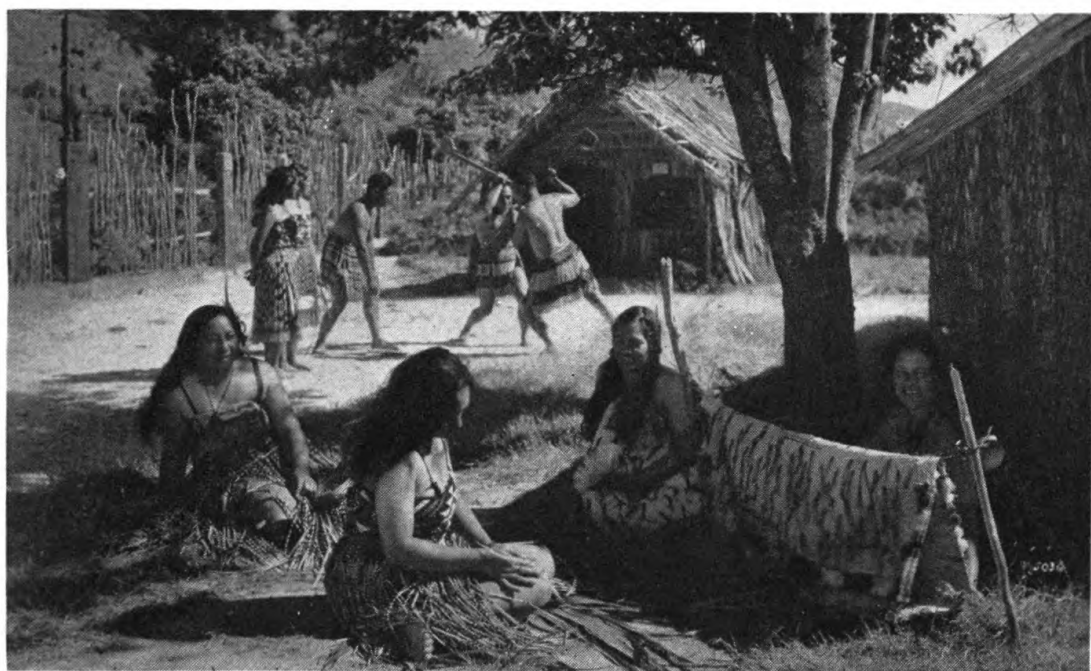
The early years of the century had seen great tribal wars break out and flame from one end of the country to the other. Te Rauparaha, whose name lives as that of a murdering marauder and a great savage tactician, led his Raukawa people from the King Country in the North to the plains near Otaki in the South, and the tale of that great movement was one of murder and merciless hunting out and exterminating of opposing tribes. In the later stages of his campaigning he used, with devastating effect, the newly introduced muskets of the white man, the *rakau pakeha*, the foreigners' sticks. These terrifying weapons, against which it was hopeless to resist, were used in the slaughter of the men and women and children of a small tribe that lived on an island in Lake Horowhenua — and we are told that, in the terror the first unexpected volley from the shore brought, the people of the fortress tried to escape by swimming and were picked off, one by one, as they approached the land.

No war of extermination, however, was ever waged by the Pakeha against the Maori. On the contrary, the relationship between the newcomer and the native was, broadly considered, perhaps the best of its

kind that history records. After a short period of hit or miss individual negotiations, the famous treaty of Waitangi was signed, in 1840, which in effect stabilized the ownership of land in the natives occupying it, at the same time reserving a vague over-all sovereignty to the British crown.

The treaty has formed the basis for all negotiations regarding land, and while the spirit of the law has been ignored at times, and while some negotiations ran into overwhelming complexities of tribal ownership, there has been a strong and consistent attempt on the part of the Pakeha population and government to interpret the terms of the treaty in the way most favorable to the Maori. Those members of land development companies who have shown a tendency toward sharp dealing have been treated firmly, and today, if a Pakeha wishes to acquire land owned by a Maori he faces a difficult task, for before the Maori can alienate the land, the consent of all his tribesmen who may have an interest in that land must be obtained.

Both the Maori and the Pakeha were fortunate in having as temporal and spiritual leaders during the early days, men who were sympathetic toward and interested in the native culture. The name Williams stands in the foremost rank of missionaries who have served the cause of linguistics; that of Grey stands



Reconstructed Maori Village



Girls of Te Arawa tribe of Ohinemutu

in like place among those rare politically appointed governors-general who take an honest and thorough interest in the native people whom destiny and political expediency have put under their control.

Sir George Grey must have been a man whose perceptions and mentality bordered close upon genius. He was a man of considerable scholastic attainment and some administrative reputation when he was sent, in 1845, to become head representative of Her Majesty's Government in New Zealand. That he was a man of keen sensibilities and that he possessed a lively realization of his responsibilities toward the people is best shown in some paragraphs which appear in the preface to the English translation of his monumental collection of Maori legends — *Nga Mahi a nga Tupuna*, The Deeds of the Ancestors. I quote the paragraphs here — they were written nearly a century ago, but they have never been surpassed as a delicate and sympathetic statement of the responsibilities of a man in his position.

"I soon perceived," he writes after describing in a few brief words the conditions which he found upon arriving to take over his task, "that I could neither successfully govern, nor hope to conciliate, a numerous and turbulent people, with whose language, manners, customs, religion, and modes of thought I was quite unacquainted. In order to redress their grievances, and apply remedies, which would neither wound their feelings nor militate against their prejudices, it was

necessary that I should be able thoroughly to understand their complaints; and to win their confidence and regard, it was also requisite that I should be able at all times, and in all places, patiently to listen to the tales of their wrongs or sufferings, and, even if I could not assist them, to give them a kind reply, couched in such terms as should leave no doubt in their minds that I clearly understood and felt for them, and was really well disposed toward them.

“To my surprise, however, I found that these chiefs (with whom he had been corresponding, through interpreters, in regard to matters of the wars which were then in progress) either in their speeches to me, or in their letters, frequently quoted, in explanation of their views and intentions, fragments of ancient poems or proverbs, or made allusions which rested on an ancient system of mythology; and although it was clear that the most important parts of their communications were embodied in these figurative forms, the interpreters were quite at fault — they could then rarely (if ever) translate the poems or explain the allusions.”

Sir George thereupon set out to learn everything that he could possibly learn of the natives whom he wished to know and befriend. He did not confine his efforts to a mere learning of the language; he went farther back and learned all that he could persuade his Polynesian friends to tell him of the legends and the history and the religion of the race. In a word, he delved into the culture of the race and into the history of the culture, and he established, knowingly or not, a precedent of interest in and sympathy for the native people.

He had a rich and fertile field for study, and the people with whom he was in contact and whose ways had so interested him were members of a race whose characteristics and appearance are peculiarly appealing to the European. Culturally the most advanced of the Polynesian peoples, they had developed a complex and on the whole attractive economy and way of life by the time that Abel Tasman and the famous Captain Cook appeared, in the late 18th Century. When the whalers began to come, some years later, they found a stalwart and hospitable people living well ordered lives in clean and hygienic surroundings, a people who had already begun to shape the country they inhabited to their needs, who were tilling the soil, and who had developed a system of division of labor almost comparable to that of the visitors. It was a people in whom there was deep appreciation of beauty, who were skilled artists and orators, and who revered those accomplishments, and who, above all, were able fighters and proud of their ability.

There was one characteristic that appealed in particular to the English, a trait of character of the Maori warrior that expressed itself in an almost quixotic observance of a primitive code of chivalry. There was the case of the Maori war party that was attacked and put to rout by a British unit one Sunday. We read that the action of the British was looked upon with

consternation and bewilderment by the Maoris, who knew that the Sabbath was a holy day for the Christian British, and who had themselves refrained from fighting on that day for that reason. Again, there was the case of a small group of British soldiers who, separated from their comrades during a punitive expedition into the wilder parts of the country, were picked up by a group of the enemy and taken to the local hilltop *pa*. There they were led before the chief, and he, seeing the pitiable state in which they found themselves, for they were half starved and ill and weak, fed them and sent them home. For, he said, there was no sport in fighting a man who was in no condition to fight back, and he directed them to rest and regain their strength and return to fight things out when they had recovered.

There was much in the Maori that appealed to the best in the Britisher, and throughout the years of the wars there grew up a healthy feeling of mutual respect, a feeling that has grown and strengthened in the years of peace that have followed. But in spite of it, and because of the tremendous shift in his economic and social status, the Maori declined in numbers, health, and spirits at an alarming rate. Life had changed for him in a radical manner; from his life in the clean and healthy hilltop villages and forts, he moved to the lowlands. His diet became like that of

the newcomer, and no longer did he depend for food upon the fernroot and the berries of his hills, or upon his skill with the long and slender bird spear. The diseases which the Pakeha had brought to him played havoc with him, and with the rapid decline of his numbers and his vitality came a profound sadness, a sinking of the spirit that served only to hasten his decline.

At the end of the century, the Pakeha New Zealander saw, with sorrow, what he thought to be the inevitable end of a people whom he had come to like and to respect. In the writing of that period, we see constant references to the decline and the approaching extinction of the native race, and such references are always couched in terms of regret.

The almost miraculous recrudescence of vitality that began to be noticed in the first years of the century may be traced to several sources. The first and the most obvious of these sources is the yeoman service which was performed by a small but energetic group of young Maoris who realized that if their race were to survive as an entity, the motivating force for that survival must come from within the race itself, and that no implanted stimulus could serve. Sir Apirana Ngata, Sir Maui Pomare, and Te Rangi Hiroa, to name some of them, bullied and browbeat their fellow tribesmen into helping themselves.

Another source of strength for the revival of the race was the tremendous pride that the Maori took in his own history, even in the days of the lowest ebb of his fortunes. He seems always to have been able to look to his past for strength, and his sense of his own worth, while it has been strong and ineradicable, has never been assertive or obtrusive. It is as though he realized that he has behind him many centuries of history that have been recorded, in legends handed down within the various tribes, and that that history is one of accomplishment in all the fields that are known to human beings. He has been, and is, an artist. Among primitive peoples he was unsurpassed in any place or epoch as a navigator. His knowledge of the stars and of meteorology was phenomenal, and because of his dietary idiosyncrasies, his knowledge of the human anatomy was minute. He respected knowledge, and some of his most definite and stringent *tapu* rules were those having to do with the *tohungas*, the learned men of his tribes.

He has never been separated entirely from his past, for the very land he lives on is identified intimately with his history and that of his family. His neighbors are his fellow tribesmen, and more often than not they are his blood relatives. He and they know each other's family history. If by chance the neighbor is from another tribe, the chances are that the genealogy

of that tribe is not unknown to him, and that far back in the history of the generations he and that neighbor also may find a common ancestor.

Of a piece with that realization of his past is his dependence upon it and his curious sense of identification with it. His most rigid rules of personal conduct are dictated by his respect for the reputation enjoyed by his ancestors, a reputation for personal honor, for bravery in battle, and for wisdom. It is as though the ancestors themselves were personally concerned with the manner in which he fulfills his duties, and his greatest care is that there be no damaging of that reputation.

And there, I think, lies the reason for the great difference between Maori-Pakeha relations in New Zealand and White-Negro relations in the United States. Where the modern Maori lives on good terms with his past and looks on it with quiet pride, the Negro looks back only on a vague and distant history of origin in a land as alien to him as it is to his white fellow countrymen. Where the Maori realizes that although he was overcome in a hopeless fight against the arms and skill of the white invader but was never wholly conquered, the Negro lives and struggles under the tremendous psychological handicap of having been a slave, and not that alone — of having been slave to the people among whom he now lives. Where

the Maori has a sense of being one with his fellow Maori, the Negro has no real sense of kinship with his fellow Negro aside from the spurious sense of kinship arising from a similarity of color. Resulting from this great and fundamental difference in the degree with which the two peoples are in contact with their racial past is the difference in their ability or willingness to treat with their white fellow countrymen.

There is a complete lack of self-consciousness on the part of the Maori that is in complete contrast with the obtrusive and almost painful self-consciousness of the Negro in all those activities which require intimate contact with the white. Whereas the Maori knows implicitly that he is respected by the Pakeha for the same basic reason that he respects the Pakeha in his turn, the Negro seems to think, rightly or wrongly, that if he wishes to place himself *en rapport* with a white man it is necessary that he make a definite and sometimes extraordinary effort to place himself outside his essential "negro-ness."

FINALLY, after months of delay, word came to me that my request for leave had been granted, and that for twelve days I would be able to wander about and call my soul my own. I uttered a glad shout and spat on my hands and set about making plans for a trip that would carry me far away from the beaten track and far away from tourist routes, into the backwoods where my friends the Maoris lived in something approaching their ancient state. And I decided to call on Kingi and ask him to help me. He would know the correct routes, if anyone did.

There was another reason also, why I wanted to consult him. The trip would in all probability be my only chance to be in real Maori surroundings, and the thought had been growing in my mind that for a person like myself, in similar circumstances, who has an honest interest in a group like the Maori, there are two fairly safe courses of conduct open. One can, on the one hand, approach them as an utterly and frankly ignorant stranger and trust to his own tact and courtesy to help him out. And in that case, I think, he will be quite safe. He will always find the courtesy

returned, and he will be treated hospitably. On the other hand, he can approach them as one who has been interested enough to try to find out something of them beforehand, and who has gone to some little trouble to acquaint himself with their customs before visiting them. I suspected that in such case the reception would be a little warmer and that he would learn more. I wanted Kingi's views on that, for he was a wise old man and he knew his people.

I think that I chose wisely, for not only did Kingi map out my route for me, but on the subject of my knowing something of the customs of the people, he was heartily and emphatically in agreement, and he at once set about explaining some of the more elementary matters of etiquette. Most of the things he told me were of a dehortative nature: I was not to do this, I must try to avoid that. I was not, for instance, to enter a strange *marae*, a courtyard, unless I was invited to do so or accompanied by one of the local people. I was on no account to show any interest whatever in the burial places, for they are *tapu*.

"Many of the old *tapu* ideas still exist," he said, "for they were not unreasonable things to begin with. They always had a meaning and a purpose, and a good many of the reasons and purposes and meanings haven't changed. And while a Maori will forgive a Pakeha for trespassing on the ground that the poor

chap doesn't know any better, he will love him for being careful to observe and respect the old customs. You are going to meet with hospitality, Zimmie.

"If you find it possible, which is unlikely," he went on, "try to mention the ancestors of the person you are meeting, and try to feel as he does when he thinks of them — try to feel heartbroken that the old great men and women are not with us now to help us. If he cries, try to cry with him. And then point out that the heritage the old ones have left us is a great one, and that he is fortunate in being of the descent of such and such a one."

I never succeeded in going quite that far, for at the time I had neither the tribal nor the genealogical knowledge — and, coming straight out like that, the idea of tears and sentimentality over the long dead seemed to me to smack a little too much of formalistic mourning. But later on, on the windy East Cape, I recalled his words when I saw the tears in the eyes of the old men as they welcomed Pine Taiapa home and rubbed noses with him in the greeting called the *hongi*, the salute that has such an appealing and satisfying intimacy. And all during my stay in *Aotea-roa* I remembered what Kingi had told me, and my observance of some of the basic ideas of Maori etiquette helped me immeasurably in getting to know the people.

As I rose to leave the office, he handed me two envelopes.

“Just hand them to the men whose names are on the envelopes,” he said, “I’ve told them who you are and why you are traveling through their territory, and you won’t have to explain at all.”

The same evening found me on a north bound train, in an incredibly cold and uncomfortable sleeping car, and the next afternoon brought me to Rotorua, the real beginning of my trip.

2

Rotorua is a beautiful place in the midst of an interesting and popular thermal region. All through the clean and pretty town there are bath houses where one can enjoy the scalding hot mineral water; even in the hotels it is piped into the baths, so that a half drawn tub looks as though it were half filled with flawless emerald. The streets were filled, the day I arrived, with people of the Arawa tribe, descendants of the band who had come to New Zealand from far off, legendary Hawaiki in the canoe named Te Arawa. I watched them as unobtrusively as I could, for it was the first time that I had seen any large group of Maoris, and these were of one of the proudest of all the tribes, and one that was very conscious of its *maoritanga*.

One of the letters that Kingi had handed me bore the name of Tai Mitchell, of Rotorua, and a question put to the first Maori I met, a pleasant looking and dignified old man, brought me exact directions for finding his office. He was not in, but his pretty, brown-skinned secretary told me that I would find him at home.

“It’s down through Ohinemutu, just past the *whare runanga*, you know.”

It took me the time spent in walking two squares to figure out that *whare runanga* probably meant meeting house. I kept on down the street toward the little native town of Ohinemutu, and followed the road along the lake shore, and as I followed it, I remembered that I was walking on ground that is alive with the history of the people who live there. For centuries the people of the Arawa have lived and fought over this lake-studded plateau, and each deed and misdeed done there is kept alive in their legends and songs.

I suppose that Rotorua could hardly help becoming a tourist center, for the scenery, the natural wonders of the hot springs, and the personal beauty and artistic temperament of the Maori people act as a magnet to the traveler. In justice, too, the attractions seem to have been managed in a restrained and sensible sort of way. It is as though the people have tried hard to

strike the kind of balance dictated by their sense of dignity and their appreciation of the worth of their own background, and the result is that while one can buy cheap *piu-piu* skirts and gimcrack *paua* ornaments, he cannot secure a few feet of amateur movies posed by natives for the cost of a dollar or so, as he can in the western United States. If he does come in personal contact with the Maoris, he is treated as a welcome guest, and unless he is remarkably complacent, he leaves with the faint impression that, if a favor was conferred, it was not he who conferred it.

Halfway through the little *pa*, I spied an old woman, sitting in the sun, smoking, and, partly because of her chin, which was marvelously tattooed, and partly because I like old people, I spoke to her, and asked her how to find Tai. She told me that if I waited for a short while, I was sure to see him, for the road before us was the only one between his home and the town. As she spoke, she made room for me on the stoop beside her, and I sat down.

There is a restful sort of assurance, a dignified confidence about the old people of any group that respects its old people, and since the Maori lives close to and on good terms with his past, he considers his old people as something more than just friends or relatives who have been a long time with him. I think

that he unconsciously regards them as being closer, in some way, to the ancestors, and, indeed, in the process of becoming ancestors themselves; and the old people, secure in the respect and affection of the younger, are quiet and content, and, in a way, beautiful.

All these thoughts did not come into my mind there, however. The two of us sat in the welcome warmth of the afternoon sun, silent, looking out across the lake. Nearby, in a small meadow, it seemed to me as though there were a cloud of steam rising, and when I asked about it, she told me that the whole land around the *pa* was dotted with hot springs, and that they had laid coils of pipe in them, so that fresh water could be run, hot, into the house. She told me also that the *wai ariki*, the hot spring, where Hine-moa had rested after swimming across the lake at night, was not far away, at the lake side. And I was glad that I had read that charming story, for her reference to it was casual, as though it were to be expected that such an important event would be known.

"*E noho ra, e kui, e.*" She smiled at me as I said it, for my pronunciation was perhaps as bad as my intention was good. I was glad of the meeting, for the short time I had spent with her had in some way put me at my ease, so that when I spoke to Tai and

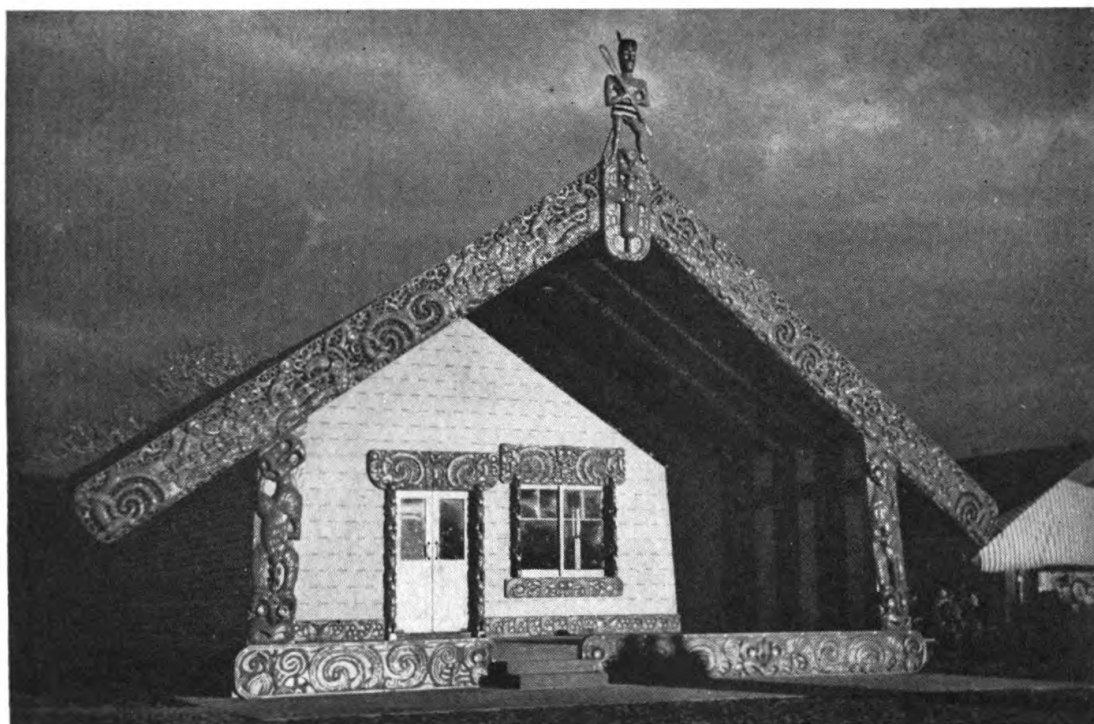
handed him Kingi's letter, it was without any feeling of self-consciousness. I watched him as he glanced through it.

It seemed hard to reconcile his appearance with his *mana*, his reputation among his own people and the Pakeha as well, for he was rather small and quietly dressed, and when he spoke, it was in a low, unhurried, almost casual way. But I appreciated the courteous way in which he handed me the letter to read, and I could feel his observant eyes on me as I read. It took an effort on my part to keep from whistling, for Kingi had done me well. Too well, indeed, for as I read, I learned that I was an anthropologist, famous in my own country. Glory, laud, and honor! I should have to speak to my friend Kingi, I thought, as I folded and returned the note, and accepted, with thanks, Tai's invitation to have a cup of tea at his house.

3

"You see," he said, "we have our own *pa*."

We had left the road and come by a short lane into what looked like a large, irregular formal garden. Around it, and following no plan except the whim of the builder, were four or five houses, built in the European style, well kept and neat. His daughters lived there, he told me, and then he pointed to a col-



Whare-runanga



“Teko-teko always look like the devil”

umn of steam in one corner of the lawn, where the usual hot spring had been walled up and covered over, with pipes leading from it to the houses. Across one corner of the garden a good sized stream flowed quietly toward the lake, and the lawns that ran down to the edge of it were as thick and soft as velvet, while here and there he had planted *rimu* trees and had trimmed them as we trim our boxwoods. There was something reminiscent of home in the scene, and in the faint chill of the air, for it was autumn, and the sun was low.

There was a fire in the big living room, and as we sat there and chatted, it seemed to me as though an unending procession of people came and went. Tai's family connections were large, and I was introduced to so many people so fast that I gave up trying to keep track of them. A pleasant, pretty young woman came and sat with us, and with her was her son, a sturdy youngster with an interesting bruise under one eye. His father, the woman explained, was a prisoner of war in Italy, and I have often wondered, since then, whether he has gotten back.

Not a word had Tai said so far about the purpose of my visit to him. His hospitality, and the way I was made to feel at home, made me hesitate about mentioning it, for I didn't want to seem impatient or unappreciative. Besides, Kingi had said that, after

presenting the letter, I was to leave the rest to the addressee, and it was warm and easy and comfortable before the fire.

Suddenly he rose and went to the door to greet two men, and after a quick low flurry of greetings, he brought them over to the light of the fire. The big, rangy Maori was a stranger to me, but as I caught a full view of the older man, I felt that my luck was in at last. I knew him, both from photos and from hearsay, for the quiet, soft-voiced, cultured old man was, and is, perhaps the most famous and able living Maori. And as Tai introduced us, and he spoke and shook my hand, I began to understand why he is so liked and respected by both the Maori and the Pakeha.

When Apirana Ngata came to manhood, sometime about the end of the last century, his people had reached the nadir of their fortune. The great tribes had been decimated, and smaller ones had disappeared entirely, in the great intertribal wars of the latter half of the century; the diseases brought by the Pakeha had played havoc with them; the impact of civilization from Europe, it seemed, was too much for even the vigorous and hardy Polynesian Maori. His numbers had dwindled from something over a hundred thousand to a pitiful and fast disappearing fourth of that. A tremendous sadness and depression

of spirit weighed down upon the remnant, and even those Pakeha settlers who felt kindly disposed to the Maori — and they were many — were convinced in their hearts that another generation would see the extinction of the race.

Something in the nature of a miracle occurred, however, that even now is a cause for wonder. A small group of young Maoris, keen and well educated young men from Te Aute College, in some mysterious way turned the tide and succeeded in awakening their people. Apirana Ngata, Te Rangi Hiroa, James Carroll, and Maui Pomare formed the nucleus of the group, which contained doctors as well as shrewd politicians, and working skilfully upon the pride of their people and upon their sense of the worth of their own traditions, they succeeded in teaching the Maori to retain what was most valuable of his own heritage and to select the best of what the Pakeha had to offer him.

Such was the success that came to them that now those who survive of the original group can count a hundred thousand fellow Maoris. They can look into every phase of the life and business of the country and see Maoris holding respected positions in politics, law, medicine, and the teaching professions. Te Rangi Hiroa, whose English name is Peter Buck, is an internationally famous anthropologist and is now in

charge of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Sir Apirana himself has served for thirty-two years as Maori Member of Parliament of New Zealand, but apart from that he has been a tireless worker in the preservation of the traditions of his people.

Some of this I knew at the time, and the rest of it I learned much later, but already I knew enough of the reputation, the *mana*, of the old man to realize that I was talking to one who would be remembered and sung about as long as Maoris continued to remember and sing about their heroes. For he is that, just as surely as was any of the traditional figures who guided his canoe to the shores of Aotea-roa.

It was hard to realize from his appearance that he was such a person, however. To me he seemed to be just a kindly, tolerant old man with a pleasant smile, that was half hidden under a clipped grey mustache, and a soft deep voice. He sat back comfortably in his arm chair before the fire and looked at us all in turn. His heavy-lidded eyes gave his face a sleepy look. He had come to Rotorua on Native Department business, and we had tea together before he set out for home. As we put him on the train for Wellington, Tai Mitchell mentioned my plans, and suggested, quite casually, that Pine Taiapa, the captain who had come in with Sir Api, was on his way home, and that his route lay around the East Cape, through the real

Maori country. Would I care to go with him and his wife? They would act as my guides as far as their home in Tiki-tiki, and from there on I would have no trouble, since Gisborne was only a day by bus. If it appealed to me, we could leave the next morning at eight, by the little accommodation bus. I agreed, and we all set off for the depot, put Sir Apirana aboard his train, and I went to my hotel.

My way led me through the center of town, and once again I felt bad about the cheap, tawdry imitations of wood carvings and flax work that the shops palmed off on the tourist trade — but the air was clear and cold, and the town itself was clean and quiet and pretty. And as I turned in at the walk to the hotel door, a crowd of youngsters passed me, bound for the cinema on the corner. I looked at them, and decided that they presented a fairly good miniature of New Zealand, for half of them were Maori and half were Pakeha, and they were having a noisy good time together. I decided that I liked Rotorua, and I went to bed.

4

The morning was raw and chilly, and down from the mountains of the Urewera country a blustering, squally wind was driving a mass of broken grey clouds. The few people astir were hurrying along,

well wrapped and leaning to the wind, and the knuckles of my right hand were numb as I arrived at the bus station. I picked a sheltered doorway, out of the wind, for I had twenty minutes to wait, and the wind was searching out every opening in my clothes.

One by one, a small crowd of Maori people began to gather, and I looked at them with perhaps more interest than courtesy, for they were to be my traveling companions. A slender old woman, her iron grey hair in two thick braids, and her straight shoulders covered with a dark woolen shawl, was talking in a low tone to a rugged-looking, grey haired old man. Off to one side, a younger woman stood motionless, a fat and lively baby over her left arm.

“Pardon me, please — aren’t you Captain Zimmerman?”

I turned quickly, and found myself looking straight at the prettiest girl I had seen in years — a Maori girl, with fine features, her cheeks ruddy with the wind, and her unmistakably Maori lips curving up at the corners.

“Yes, I’m Zimmerman, but . . . ?” After all, I couldn’t say, “And who the devil are you,” however strong the temptation might be.

“Well, Uncle Tai thought you might be lonely here, waiting for the bus, and he asked me if I’d like

to come and keep you company until it comes." And then she began to chatter as though we had been at school together, and I stood and listened and wondered if a more graceful bit of hospitality had ever been shown anyone. The wind lost its edge, and the clouds were dove colored instead of slatey, and I was almost sorry when Pine Taiapa and his wife came up, for the first tenuous threads of intimacy that had begun to form were snapped.

The little bus came along, and we piled in, and as I sat next to a window, I glanced back at the sidewalk, to wave. There she was, her glorious Polynesian hair blowing back from her face, her lips curving up, her eyes half closed against the wind. One hand came up in answer to my wave, and then she turned about and strode away on her two-mile walk to the little *pa*. I never saw her again, but always, when the wind is cold and blustery and there is a ceiling of broken clouds scudding low across the sky, I have a quick, clear picture of her face, with the black hair framing it, and the ruddy cheeks, and the half smiling lips.

5

I have no idea how long it took us to get to Opotiki, on the Bay of Plenty, which was our first definite stop, for as the road twisted and wound its way down the ravines and canyons, Pine was busy telling me the

story of the reclamation of the land on either side by the Maoris. We were in Maori country by now, and on each side of the road, I could see that a strip of land, varying in width from a few hundred yards to a mile or more, had been cleared of undergrowth and woods and turned over to cattle and to sheep. And as I looked at the woods that formed a background for the *mara*, the cultivations, I could understand something of the task that had confronted the Maori and something of the persistence with which he must have worked, for never, even in tropical jungles, have I seen vegetation as thick and as impenetrable as the New Zealand "bush." But the clearings were neat and clear, and cattle or sheep, according to how long the land had been cut over, were running on all of them — fat and sleek the cattle were, for in that land of frequent rains and volcanic ash the quality of the pasturage is enough to make a dairyman's mouth water.

"It was all done by teamwork," said Pine. "There is no individual land holding, and it would be impossible for any one man to clear that kind of woods off for farm land. So the work was done by tribes, and I believe that prizes were offered, and tribal prestige was brought into the matter. By the way — my own tribe kids these people and calls them *kaikanga*, corn eaters, from the amount of the stuff they raise."

At Opotiki, Pine and his wife had to attend to some business of their own, and I had dinner with the others of the bus at a little inn. We sat together, at a large, round table. The food was good, in the English style, and I finished the soup and the meat in quick and efficient fashion, and sat back to await the dessert. The others were eating in a more leisurely way — all but one of them. The young woman, with the fat and lively baby, had a problem on her hands.

The woman was small, and the baby, as I've said, was fat and lively. And perverse. For he was busily and happily knocking the spoon from her hands whenever she tried to lift some soup to her lips. The table cloth and the baby and the front of her dress paid ample tribute to the quickness of the baby's eye and hand, and the young mother was almost in tears. As I watched the comedy and tried hard to keep from laughing, some deep-buried spark of chivalry fanned itself into a flame and consumed what was left of my reticence, and I reached over, snatched the child, and set it on my own knee. The mother gave me a grateful look and began sailing into the neglected soup; the baby turned its head and, with a glad shout, grabbed a handful of my grizzled mustache.

Just at the moment, the waitress brought the dessert and I groaned inwardly, for it was a steamed pudding. Now by and large, England has done well by

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New Zealand — she has sent a good, sturdy class of folk to settle there, and she has not interfered to any great extent in the country's business. She has set an example for the rest of the world in her internal native affairs. But she has brought one curse to the land — English cooking, including, and with special reference to, steamed pudding. I have eaten foul and noisome messes in the jungles of the Solomon Islands, and liked them; I have crouched against the face of a gale-swept cliff of Iceland and eaten cold and suety corned willy from a rusty can — and liked it. I have tried, conscientiously, to like English food. I cannot. I can eat the meat, which is good; the boiled potato and the soggy and overcooked damp Brussels sprouts repel me, although I can, with an effort, get them down. The steamed pudding I damned well can't even swallow. But there was a dish of the unbelievably heavy and incredibly dense symbol of the Englishman's inborn tendency toward masochism sitting on the table before me, and the baby was reaching for it. I fed it to him, every last drop of a generous helping, and as the last dollop went out of sight down his maw, his eyes snapped shut as though he had been hit by a club, and I handed him back, noticeably heavier, to his mother. And to get ahead of the tale a bit, when she left the bus, several hours and many miles later, she held the youngster up for me to see. He was still



asleep. The bus pulled away, and I pondered the possibility of having to plead guilty to a charge of involuntary infanticide, but I never heard more of it.

The sun had broken through the clouds just as we came into the lovely little cup in the hills that shelters the town, and the scenery in the neighborhood made it easy to understand why the coast got its name, for if any bay ever looked like a bay of plenty, this one did. The colors were vivid — along the valley, the deep emerald of the meadows was cut by the winding blue thread of a stream that emptied, finally, into a bay that was just as blue, but of a different shade. The flowers along the walls of the gardens, and along the edges of the highway itself, were so intensely colored that they seemed to quiver, and the pines and macrocarpa looked like a tapestry of dark, olive colored velvet along the lanes. And there was no wind here, for the town was sheltered by the semicircle of hills around it.

The countryside changed immediately we had left the town, and we passed from cultivated land to a sort of frontier-like country, where the road was close to the sea-side cliff, and the wild olive green forest pressed down close to the road. The hills edged out toward the sea here, and the clearings were narrow and slanted sharply up to the bush, while more often than not, the cliff, grown over with a tangle of vines

and trees, dropped off to the water's edge from the very side of the road. Always, back of the forest, and seeming to march with us, were the mountain tops of the Urewera highlands, and always, rushing down the valleys or spilling over the crests of the low foothills, came the cold and blustering wind.

As the countryside changed, so did the people and the houses, for we were in the real Maori country now, and as we drew farther away from the Arawa country, the Pakeha influences became less and less, and the Maori blood was less mixed. Now, instead of large and well squared meadows and houses we saw small, single dwellings and small groups of them, set at odd intervals and angles around the tiny *mara*. The very houses themselves took on an individuality, an indefinable difference in the height of side walls and in the angle of the eaves and gables; and often, in the midst of a little group, I could see a slightly larger house where the differences in angles and walls were more pronounced and unequivocal, and where the bargeboards were wide and covered with carvings. These buildings were usually brick red and chocolate brown, the old Maori colors, and they were the communal meeting houses, the *whare runanga*, centers and focal points of the communal spirit of the people.

At one point along the road Pine spoke to the young bus driver, and the two of them began to watch

the houses and the clearings closely. Finally the bus stopped, and Pine pointed to a little house far back up against the edge of the wood.

“Te Ara Ngamoki lives there,” he said. “Would you like to see if he’s home and deliver your letter to him? The driver says he’ll wait a while for you.”

I had nearly forgotten the second of the two letters Kingi had given me, and I began to get off, blessing the informality of life thereabouts that made even bus drivers amenable to some sort of human feeling. But a little boy came dashing down the lane to the bus, and Pine and the driver spoke to him.

“The kid says that Te Ara is away for the day. Do you want to leave the letter for him?”

I penciled a note on the envelope and gave it to the lad, and he dashed away back to the house, holding it like a flag. Some day I shall call on Te Ara Ngamoki and apologize for not having been able to stop to meet him — and I have an idea what he will say: “Yes, I have my friend Kingi’s letter, and I have been waiting for you.” And the conversation will go on from that point as though he had received it only yesterday. As though, in fact, all yesterdays were equidistant from the present, as I believe they may well be on that remote coast, where people are well acquainted with, and on good terms with, twenty generations of ancestors.



## 6

Now that Pine was coming into the country of his relatives, the stops began to be interesting little interludes, for at all of them we were met by little knots of his kin folk. Three or four or five old men would be waiting for us at the inn, and as Pine left the bus, a strange and touching scene would be enacted. The oldest man of the group would come forward with his right hand outstretched. Pine would grasp it and lift it breast high before him, and then, leaning forward, he would press his nose against that of the old man, draw it away a bit, and repeat. Three times he would do it, and while he was doing so, both he and the old man would murmur and sob gently. And as he drew away to make room for the next, each oldster would have wet cheeks, for the tears would be streaming down his face. And as I watched each of these meetings, I thought what a fine thing it must be, this thing of being a Maori coming home to such a welcome, and I remembered and understood old Kingi's words: "If he cries, try to cry with him." I saw my friend Pine do just that thing, and, as I said, I began, faintly, to understand.

We were coming near a place called Te Kaha, and Pine had a welcome errand to perform there. There was an inn, and the owner of the inn had a son, who

had joined the army and had gone to the Near East. He had served under Pine, and just a day or so before, the word had come to Pine that the boy had been awarded a decoration. Pine was to tell the old man. As a matter of fact, I believe there were two sons, but more of that in a moment.

For many miles, by now, we had been climbing, steadily, farther and farther from the sea, although we were still running near the brink of the cliff, and when we finally turned from the road to the inn, we were on a high headland, and the sea was several hundred feet below us. It was an eerie place, for we seemed to be near the top of the world. Off to seaward, the land dropped away so suddenly that there was no perspective — a few feet away I could see a tree and a few shrubs, and beyond that nothing but emptiness until far, far away, the odd, quicksilver surface of the water. And inland, the foothills crowded so close upon us that the farther peaks were hidden, and beyond the near crest-line, nothing but the wind-driven clouds could be seen.

And there, in front of the inn, the usual crowd of rugged, quiet old men was waiting for us, and once more I saw the intimate, affectionate greeting, the *hongi*, that Pine exchanged with each of them. Somewhat apart from the rest, two picturesque figures stood and waited, and after greeting the last of his

friends Pine went over, spoke at length to them, and then beckoned to me. I met them — one was the father of the boy who had been decorated, the other was the lad's uncle, and they were as like as twins. Each of them was small, quiet, and a little deaf, and each of them was dressed in a huge, bulky, stiff-looking water-proof cape — and I never knew, for sure, which was which, for we all went into the inn, and each of us bought a round of raw Australian whiskey for all the rest, as an antidote against the wind that was howling over the hills and trying to lift the inn over the cliff's edge.

After the drinking was over, and when the last of the handshaking was done, Pine and I and Mrs. Taiapa went into the living room of the little house beside the inn to have tea, and we sat before the fire, the three of us, and soaked up the warmth. Mrs. Walker, the wife of the owner, was there, and as she and Mrs. Taiapa drifted into gossip and small talk of the kind that excludes men more effectively than a closed door, Pine told me more tales of the people of the neighborhood. I already knew something of the reputation that the Maori Battalion had built up for itself, but the details of its founding were still a mystery to me. He gave me some of them, and they in turn gave me some interesting sidelights on the Maori character.



*Hariata wears a kiwi-feather cloak*





## 7

It seems that at the outbreak of this war, the native population decided that it wanted to participate on an absolutely equal footing with its Pakeha fellow-countrymen, and representations were made to the government to that effect within a matter of days after the news came that the country was at war. Within a few weeks a large group of Maoris had entered the service, and when it was decided to form a homogeneous battalion, the matter of enlistments became something of a joke. The natives were not, by law, subject to conscription, but they were, also by law, subject to the same conditions as the Pakeha regarding overseas duty — no one could be sent across until he was twenty-one years of age. That, apparently, was not at all to the Maori's liking; it was not his idea of fighting a war, sitting around a camp and doing squads right and left, ticking off the days until he reached the arbitrary and mysteriously significant age of twenty-one. So, as Sir Apirana has said in his *Price of Citizenship*, the young Maori "lied brazenly" and went overseas.

Pine also told me, and this was later confirmed by a recruiting officer at Gisborne, that the really funny part of the matter occurred at the early part of the enlistment drive. Each settlement, each district, was

allotted a quota, and these quotas were the result of rather careful consideration, for the government had no wish to deprive any one locality of many of its young men. The enlistment officers would travel through the country, with their details of men, and on coming to a town, they would confer with the leading men and sign up the allotted number of recruits. To the latter they would give instructions to report on a given date at Gisborne, let us say, where uniforms, rations, and quarters would be arranged for them. Then the recruiting detail would set out for the next town, after marking in its little red book that the government could expect to be served faithfully and devotedly by forty-seven young men from the hamlet of Matariki.

On the date set, the officer would go to meet the recruits in Gisborne. He would bring out his records, read off the names, and when he got to the end of them, he would find some ten men whom he could not account for. He would address the leader of the group.

“Didn’t you understand that only those men that signed up were to come?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then who the hell are all the rest of these people?”

“Well, Hoani, there, is my cousin and he couldn’t

“Oh — Good! All night, all night.”

And thereafter, all the first reports turned in on

“*Rebel*” said Linus, and went home, and that

## 8

Finally, tea was brought in by a young Maori girl, and after setting the tray on the table before us, she stepped back and looked at me with a lively, frank sort of interest. And I stared back in the same way, for she made a lovely picture. She was small, rather strongly built, and her erect carriage did nothing to hide the lines of her firm young breasts as they thrust forward against the bright print dress she wore. Her brown cheeks had a ruddy, healthy undertone, and her thick, glossy hair, done in a coronation braid, had overtones of copper in it, for she was one of the *urukehu*, a Polynesian redhead, a strain that goes far back into antiquity. She would have been a beauty, dressed in the old fashion, in the *piu-piu* skirt, with her hair flowing free under a narrow *taniko* head band. But she was lovely enough as she stood in the light of the fire and smiled at me, perfectly unself-conscious.

As we were about to go, a stranger came into the courtyard and held a short talk with Pine. I watched them, and as I watched, I could see a look of pity come over his face, and he beckoned to me. It was a sad bit of news that he passed on to me — a young lad who lived close by had failed to come home the

evening before, but since visiting back and forth between friends is the rule rather than the exception thereabouts, his parents had thought nothing of his absence. In the morning they had found him dead in the paddock, and there was no sign of how he had died. They were to hold the *tangi* for him that day — would we care to stay and help them mourn?

It was an honor to be asked, but we had to leave, for the bus schedule was not the most dependable thing in the world, and the rivers were rising because of the rains in the hills and might become unfordable at any time. So we had to beg off, which Pine did with great finesse and diplomacy, and we climbed aboard the bus and drove off. As we turned into the main highway, a hundred yards away, we came quite close to the little carved meeting house, and there on the covered porch was the child's coffin. In front of it, seated on the ground, was an old, old woman. She was waiting to welcome the mourners in the old, traditional wailing phrases, as they entered the *marae*.

The land grew wilder and more rugged by the mile. There were wild outcroppings of rock here and there, and often the hillsides broke away into cliffs. The shore itself was a jumble of fallen rocks, hung with drifted sea weed and rough with barnacles. The road followed the contour of the hills, and once, when

“Look! We used to play around here, and we were frightened one night — right here at the head of the glen — ”

The next valley, one that held a slow, placid river, was as different from it as day from night. It was wide, and beside the stream were broad meadows, brilliantly green, for the upper reaches of the river lay in volcanic country, and the current had brought down with it a rich cargo of alluvial volcanic ash. It was park land, with huge trees here and there over it, and the meadows themselves, though unfenced and

By nightfall we had cut across the tip of the East Cape and were within a few miles of Pine's home. Also, we were out from under the partial protection of the hills, and there was nothing to stop the force of the southerly wind that roared and howled up the gorges and across the cliffs. We left the bus at a small hamlet, and when we had finished dinner at the inn, a cleancut, rugged young Maori came up and told Pine that the car was waiting to take us back into the hills. He drove us, and I think I shall never forget that last leg of our trip.

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The inn was quiet and cozy, with a fire going in every room and the noise of the wind deadened by the well built walls. I gave up my bag and went to the lounge. There again a bright blaze lit up the room, and I pulled up a chair and sat as close to it as I dared and listened to the wind in the eaves. And when I went to bed and crawled in, I found that some blessed soul had put in a flat stone jug full of hot water and wrapped in a woolen scarf.

## 9

There are many pleasant ways of awakening. There is the drowsy, warm interval when one gradually realizes that in the night the weather has changed, and that the soft pearly light comes from the snow that has fallen and is still falling, and that the bed is warm and the tip of the nose is cold. There is the entirely indescribable interval between First Call and Reveille in an encampment, when no single sound can be heard, but when the entire process of awakening can be sensed and becomes almost audible. There is, again, that moment when the sleeping figure beside one stirs, and one gropes swiftly for a name, and gently pushes the tress of hair from his face, because



the damned thing tickles, and a sneeze is not to be thought of.

All those moments are dear to the sensualist in each of us, but for my part, at least, there is none of them that can compare with the instant when one realizes that on the little table beside his pillow sits a steaming cup of strong tea, and that a jug of boiling water is waiting on the wash stand.

That was the way I came to life the next morning in the inn at Tiki-tiki, and as I used both good things in order, I wondered why such a simple, superlative aid to good living had never been adopted in America. Because it was too British, perhaps, or because the proper way of making tea is a lost art there? A soggy tea bag in a cup of hot water would be a mighty sorry substitute for what I had just taken in.

The town is built around a fork in the road, and in the acute angle of the fork a sharp, prow-shaped hill juts up perhaps a hundred feet. Atop the hill, commanding the roads and the gorges, exposed to every wind that blows, is the old Maori church. Pine had told me of it, and we were to go through it now to see the carved wood work and the decorated latticed panels. He was to explain everything to me, for he himself was a skilled carver, a sort of modern example of the old *tohunga whakairo*, and he knew

the various intricate designs and the names and the meanings of them.

The wind was blowing steadily and strong, and there was a cold, persistent, unhurried rain, but the crude, effective colored glass windows warmed the light that came through them, and as the church was exposed to the wind on three sides, so also was it exposed to the light. There were few shadows, therefore, and few highlights, and the chocolate brown wood of the fantastically carved altar and pulpit and pews and beams glowed somberly, and here and there, in the designs, pieces of *paua* shell shone out, startlingly, with a weird, opalescent gleam. Overhead, the beams were painted with the lovely intricate *kowhaiwhai* pattern in black, white, and brick red — a graceful, involved scroll work pattern, based on the beautiful, natural curve of the unfolding fern frond, while down the side wall were panels of lattice work, in the *tukutuku* designs.

It was an Anglican church, and the plan of it was in the usual form — the nave was perhaps fifty feet, rear to front, and the chancel, the lectern, the pulpit, the altar, and the reredos were all in proper proportion and place. The pews were arranged, decorously, along the central aisle. But there, as though the builders had resolved to yield so much and no more to

For one thing, it seemed to me as though the side walls were low in proportion to the rest of the building, and that as a result the whole edifice had a squat, massive look. Perhaps, though, this impression came from the heavy beams and the solid appearance of all the wood work, and from the fact that there were no bright colors in it, save for the ceiling designs.

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toes of an enemy, watching for the tiny movement that would tell him of the impending blow and that the moment was right for an explosive parry and counter.

The human figure entered the picture again in the carvings on the huge upright beams that braced the side walls at five-foot intervals — massive, eighteen-inch logs with slightly flattened faces, they were carved, top to bottom, so completely that scarce an inch of undecorated wood could be found. Each beam was perhaps eight feet tall, and at the head of each was a human figure, the figure of a warrior in the midst of a war dance, with his eyes of *paua* shell staring, his mouth distended, his tongue protruding in the universal grimace of defiance. Each of them had his shoulders thrown back, his hands pressed against his protruding belly, legs a little bent, and feet firmly planted. The hands, in accordance with some strange and ancient tradition, had only three fingers each, and all details of eyebrow, shoulder, elbow, hip — all were adaptations of the basic designs, the spiral and the lines of teeth and ridges.

Sometimes, below the warrior, another human figure, never quite the same and never different save in small detail, would be arranged in totem-pole fashion; sometimes all resemblance to human things would fade out, and strange traditional figures would appear

to swirl and flow over the surface of the dark wood. There would be Manaia, the bird-man, with his strange face like a lobster's claw and his undulating lizard-like body, or the *ngututa* that recalls the stiff formalized human figures of old Egyptian art. Again, in odd spaces, the foetus-like *tiki* would appear, the same *tiki* that was carved in nephrite and worn as an amulet by the girls and women. And always, weaving in and out among the distinct figures, the graceful curving spirals and ridges flowed in patterns that sometimes formed parts of the figures and sometimes were independent of them, and that were massive as well as graceful, crude as well as delicate. The distinct marks of the chisel could be seen everywhere — it was as though a fine and delicate pattern of dark lace had been magnified tremendously, so that while the pattern was still prominent, the very threads of it and the texture of those threads could be seen.

As I gazed at everything and tried to photograph it on my mind, Pine told me of the meanings and the derivation of the details. As he spoke, I noticed that, like all the officers of the British forces, he carried a swagger stick, but that his, unlike others I had seen, was not of leather, but of wood — carved at that. And he handed it to me and told me that when he had left for Africa, he had taken with him several sticks of the hard, tough wood of the *manuka* shrub, and that

while he was in the desert he had carved himself the stick, with a jackknife. I looked at it, and at the head of it was a *tekoteko*, a human figure exactly similar to the one atop the beam before me, three inches tall, perhaps, and true in every detail. I handed it back to him, and looked at him with a new kind of respect, for the work was as fine as that of a jeweler, even to the tiny but prominent penis, which the Maori carver never omits from a male figure. I remarked about that to him and there must have been something in my voice that seemed like reproof, for he answered that if I looked closely I would also see that each figure had two arms and two legs. From that point on, I listened, and avoided asking questions.

Among the ancient Maoris, both the men and women contributed to the arts, and even today they carry on in the traditional way. The man's contribution is, and has always been, the woodcarving and the working of the local variety of nephrite, while the weaving of textiles and the making of lattices has been the woman's work. All handicraft, carving or weaving, was developed as an art and not merely as an adjunct to a skill, and long after I had left Tiki-tiki and returned to Wellington, old Pirihira Heketa told me, by hint and innuendo, some of the customs that obtained in the learning of the woman's skills.

When Captain Cook first visited the shores of New

Zealand he saw and remarked the carvings that decorated the great canoes, for even in those days, long before the Maori knew of metal even by hearsay, he was decorating almost all his possessions with the same designs that are seen now. His canoes were carved on bow and stern and along the strakes. The paddles and the thwarts were covered with the fine scroll work that I saw before me in the church — even the little scoops of wood that he used for bailers were adorned — all of it done with adzes and chisels of stone. An odd sort of regression here, for as often as not the wooden handle of the adze that was being used to carve a beam was itself intricately carved. The very hoe that was used to break the ground for the planting of the *kumara*, the small sticks that the women used to support their weaving, all these were covered with the scrolls and the spirals of the traditional designs.

Finally, as the time came when I had to think about catching the bus for Gisborne, the first leg of my return journey, the talk drifted to more general things, and then I must have mentioned Sir Apirana, for Pine, the big, rugged, middle-aged soldier, spoke as fine a tribute as I've heard a young man give an elder. He said that Sir Api, as he is called by everyone who knows him, began his public career by being a progressive as far as his own people went. He had realized,

back in the closing years of the last century, that the Maori was at a low level, and that the only hope for him lay in a careful selection of the good aspects of the Pakeha culture and of his own culture, and in a careful blending of what he selected. He, Sir Api, finally succeeded to a great extent, and he saw his people raise themselves up — and then, as though he were content with what he had done, he steadily became more and more Maori himself, gradually shedding whatever he had acquired superficially of the Pakeha culture and more and more approximating a chief of the old times.

“You have heard the expression ‘sitting at the feet of a teacher,’ haven’t you?” Pine asked me. “Well, I think maybe I’m the first one you ever met who really did that. When I was a child, just growing up, I knew Sir Api, and I would sit at the foot of his chair to listen to him talk, and I used to get in the way, and the older people would slap me and tell me to move off. But Sir Api made them let me stay. Yes, the old man was my hero, and I almost worshipped him.” I nodded at that, for I remembered Sir Api’s gentle face and soft, wise old eyes — yes, he had the look of one who would appeal to the young.

We left the old church and went out again into the wind and the slanting rain, and there below me was the bus, and the inn-keeper was looking aloft anx-



iously. He waved to me, and I shook hands with Pine and dashed down the hill and into the inn.

I asked for my bill. The inn-keeper smiled, and said there wasn't any. Why not? It had been "arranged"; and he smiled again. A stone wall, I thought, and no sense bucking it, and I picked up my bag and left. And as I sat down in the bus and looked back up the hill, I could see Pine. I waved and pointed back at the inn, and even at that distance I could see the white flash of his teeth under the black mustache as he grinned and waved me off.

## 10

The road wound downward to the sea, and gradually the hills and the gorges fell away behind me. The valley widened, and the river in it flowed less and less swiftly; the fields and the farms on each side were larger and larger, and the hamlets and little villages likewise. Also, the clouds broke and the mist disappeared, and by afternoon the pale sunlight of early winter shone in and warmed my shoulder as I sat and watched the changing countryside.

Finally we stopped beside a small roadside inn, and with sighs of relief we all piled out for a short stroll to stretch our legs. I stood and chatted with a couple of the passengers for a moment and then turned away to walk for a bit. As I turned, someone

“Pardon me, aren’t you Captain Zimmerman?” the voice was soft and pleasant and friendly, and as I whirled around I found myself looking into a face that matched it perfectly, for the young man was handsome and dark and he was smiling in anticipation of a friendly reply. He held out his hand and I took it. I noticed that he held it for several seconds before slowly letting it go.

So I smiled back at the sturdy good-looking young man of the Ngati Porou, and we went into the inn together. And when the bus pulled out of the courtyard and I glanced back, he was standing in the sun and waving, just as had the girl in Rotorua, his hair tossed in the breeze and the deep, rich bronze of his cheeks alive and ruddy in the golden light.

Dusk was falling as we arrived at Gisborne, and the cold grey South Pacific had sent more rain. But

the air was soft with only a hint of chill in it, and the rain was a fine, caressing Scotch mist that softened the light from the street lamps and made the paving glisten without causing any discomfort. A small row of shops lay between me and the main street of the city, and I glanced idly at them as I walked toward a hotel.

One of the windows was piled high with simple and well-made leather work — a saddle, a few bridles and pouches, and saddle bags gleamed in the soft light. Lying in one corner was a beautiful old *taniko* belt, and because I had always wanted one and because this one was of an odd and beautiful design, I went in and spoke to the keeper of the shop.

“Well, it’s not exactly for sale, you see. I took it from an old man up in the country to back with leather. Hold on, though,” he added as I murmured something about its being too bad, “come to think of it, perhaps he won’t be back.

“Let me see, now,” and he lit his pipe and walked over to the window. “Oh, hell. Here, take it. If the old boy wasn’t anxious enough to call for it in five years, I rather think he’ll be able to hold up his trousers without it. Do you think ten bob would be a fair price?”

I paid out the equivalent of \$1.75 and held the fine old piece of handwork under the light. It was perhaps

two inches wide, wider than most of the examples I had seen, and from the length it must have been made for a man with a noble torso. It was in two colors, the background being a solid off-white, while at regular intervals were small pairs of *punga* fronds worked in deep maroon. The knots were fine and evenly made, and only near the edges were there signs of age, for the threads had been disturbed a little by repeated sewing on of leather backing. I could not tell what material had been used — all I knew was that it was a lovely old thing that had served someone well for many years and that it would be safe and respected in my hands.

It was raining a little harder as I left the shop, and I thought it better to arrange for rooms and food before doing further exploring. The sidewalks were running water now, and the offices and shops were closing. People walked by with bent heads and raised umbrellas, and their eagerness and purposefulness made me feel a bit lonely. I felt lonelier still when I found that two hotels were full and that there was small chance that I could find a room in either of the others.

“Pardon me — isn’t this Captain Zimmerman?” Once more the soft, pleasant accent, and once more I whirled around. A slight, erect man in the uniform of a lieutenant stood beside me, and his face, as well as

Lieutenant Ferris was like all his fellow Maoris in his ability to make a stranger feel at home, and by the time we had spoken twice to the waiter, he had agreed to be my guest at dinner. We had dinner and talked, and when I came down, early next morning, to take the train for Napier, I found that I could not get a statement of what I owed. After a few minutes' argument, the management finally presented me with an infinitesimal bill, the exact price of one dinner. Further expostulation on my part only brought a vague reference to arrangements that had been made — by whom I could never find out. I gave up and left, and on the walk I met the lieutenant.

“Well, I’m not sure. You see, I had planned to

“Try and stop if you can. Takitimu is a splendid house, and there may be a dance there. Well, goodbye and good luck,” and we shook hands and I left.

As the train came into the small, wooden station at Wairoa I saw a stocky, well built Maori in battle dress looking anxiously at everyone that got off. His handsome fine-featured face was worried and disappointed as he turned toward me, but at the sight of the green uniform he brightened and strode over. I agreed that I was Zimmerman.

His face fell and seemed to break up into a mask of honest disappointment as I told him that I thought I had better go on my way. He didn't try to persuade me, but his disappointment seemed so genuine that as the warning bell rang, I ran back to my coach, snatched my clothing roll from the rack, and hopped

off the moving train. Once more his face reassembled itself, this time on lines denoting the deepest pleasure, and we went away together.

The sun was low in the west, and the shadows were long and chilly when we finally got to the inn and went into the lounge. Once more there was a huge log fire, and the flames of it had little flecks of blue from the deposits of salt, for it was driftwood. The brass of the fire dogs and the scuttles was polished and bright, and there was a comfortable look about the old leather chairs and the heavy tables of *rimu*. We chose one of these, and as the waiter hurried away to indulge us, a third man sat down in the odd chair, without so much as a by-your-leave. I glanced at McGregor, who nodded very slightly, and then I looked at the newcomer.

He was talking already, and from then on until we left the room he was not quiet a moment — and I'm glad he wasn't, for never in my life have I heard an unbroken recital of the deeds and misdeeds, the wisdom and the indiscretion of the inhabitants of a town like that which came from the lips of the big old man. For he was huge and rugged and very old, and he had lived in Wairoa for more years than he could remember and he was Irish. He sat and drank with us and told us tales of local men of substance that should

have brought him up for libel, but there was such an air of perfect truth about what he said, and he spoke so obviously without a trace of malice and in such entire good humor that perhaps even the maligned would not have been offended. As one tale followed another of delicately indecent hue, and as outrageous incidents of compromising situations boomed out around the dim old room, I sat back in awe.

I never knew who he was — I only know that some lad with a retentive mind and an expert stenographer should corner him, some early winter afternoon, in the room by the fire, and give him whiskey. For I think he is still there, and by now he has added to his thousand and one tales that of the middle-aged American captain and the two little Maori maids.

We said goodby to him and left him there with a full glass in his hand, gazing into the fire, and I went up for a quick change of clothes. I was grimy and wrinkled and I needed a shave, and the brass on my Sam Browne belt had been put to shame by that of the fireplace. I hurried along the dark corridor toward my room, intent on a quiet tea and an early trip to bed — and then I found my way blocked by two small, determined looking brown girls.

“Please sir do you want a hot water jug in your bed — but there’s a Maori dance at Taihoa tonight at eight o’clock.” This came out all in a breath, and I



got the impression that it and the strategy of stopping me had been rehearsed ahead of time.

“Well — ” and I looked at them again, as they stood erect and expectant before me. Each of them had an eager look of childish frankness and unself-consciousness, but apart from that there was nothing childish about them. Like the girl at Te Kaha, they were sturdy and ruddy, and firm breasts swelled out beneath the dark smock-like dresses. “Oh, all right. That is, if you two will put on your best bibs and tuckers and come along to show me the way.” And they disappeared as quickly as they had come, giggling.

## 12

It was an interesting dance, in a way, for it was in the form of a benefit for the men of the tribe who were in North Africa. The proceeds of the sale were to be used to buy preserved mutton bird and dried seaweeds and other home food to send overseas. People had come from all over the district, each bringing something of the produce of his locality that might be wanted by the people of the town. Midway through the evening, an auction was held, and each little flax basket was auctioned off. The bidding was lively, and I bid to help out the good cause, and at the end of the thing I found myself gazing in mild surprise at two

baskets of onions and one of *kumara*, the great Polynesian sweet potato, that somehow I had succeeded in buying.

The old folk sat around the dance floor in a silent line, the quiet, contemplative old men and the brooding old women with tattooed chins, and I went over and sat with them. We ate cold, ripe, boiled field corn with salt, grain at a time, and they asked me questions about my country and told me more than I could remember about their own land and tribe and families. Now and again I danced with one or the other of my partners, who turned out to be pretty and graceful and energetic, but for most of the evening I sat and talked to the old people.

The next morning, at an unchristian hour, I left the hotel and went to the station to catch my train — and there was Dick McGregor to see me off, the final obligation of hospitality. And my first trip to the East Cape and to Hawke Bay was over.

ONE rainy day, while I was sitting in the main hall of the old Sydney Street School in Wellington and listening to Sir Apirana welcome the first of his people to return from North Africa, and while I was marveling at the slow, even rhythm of his voice, a vague feeling of malaise came over me, a shivering that seemed to come from within rather than without, as though the dampness and the cold from the pelting rain outside had seeped into the depths of my bones and saturated them with the essence of chilliness. I thought at the time that it was the musty old hall that made me feel so, and I sat and listened until Sir Api had finished and while a huge American-educated Maori named Christie poked gentle fun at the States through me.

It was only when I reached the kitchen, where an old Maori woman with tattooed chin was preparing the feast, that I began to realize dimly what was shaking me, for by then I was trembling so violently that I could hardly stand, and I had come to the kitchen in the hope that the wood fire in the stove and a cup of hot water would help me. They did not, and after

a few minutes the old woman, Pirihiira Heketa, took me by both arms, shook me gently, and peered into my eyes.

“E, Hone, you sick. You don’ feel so good, Hone — you better go to the hospital, e, Hone.”

I nodded, for I knew by then that the malaria had at last caught up with me, as it did, sooner or later, with every one of us who had been on Guadalcanal. I nodded and told her that I would go right back to camp and turn in, and she helped me into my coat and walked with me to the place where my jeep and driver were waiting for me.

The rain and the wind in my face felt refreshing, in a queer and far-off sort of way, for I had suddenly become hot and half stifled. I spoke to the stocky little blond who was driving me, said goodby to Mama Heketa, and walked around the back of the jeep to climb in. Mama, in the meanwhile, was talking earnestly to young Johnson, and to give point to her words she was shaking her finger in his face.

“An’ don’ you forget what I tell you,” she said. “You do jus’ like I say, don’ you forget. ’By, Hone,” she said as she waved us off.

“Camp,” I said to Johnson and tucked my chin into my collar and closed my eyes. My head was full of soft wool and I could not see well, and my sense of time was completely askew. The jeep stopped suddenly at

And then someone was fumbling at my clothes and tugging at my shoes, and through the fog about me I could see a bunk, with great, beautiful, woolly blankets — and I sighed contentedly, for what I had been searching for was before me, and as I lay back I realized that Johnson had disobeyed orders and had taken me to the hospital. Then the vision of Mama Heketa shaking her finger under his nose came to me, and I chuckled and let myself slide into utter helplessness and, finally, to sleep.

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Dear Hone:

Uncle Kingi tells me that we are to be neighbors for a while. We live right across the road, and as soon as you are better you must come over.

Kia ora,  
Miriamā Heketa

In the bag were half a dozen small, tart apples, and I blessed Miriamā for her thoughtfulness in writing and for the instinct that had led her to send me fruit, for I had before me several days of liquid quinine, and the tart juice of the apples would cut the sickening bitterness of the dose.

Later on that evening, when the first bout of fever was over, and a curious feeling of sleepy well-being had come over me, Kingi Tahiwi came in to visit me and find out how he could help — and from then on, until finally I left the country, many months later, I was seldom away from the Maori people for more than a day at a time.

## 2

Wellington became very dear to us all, partly because of the friendliness of its people and partly because the city itself has a unique and appealing individuality. Its streets are narrow and anything but straight, and they have a disconcerting way of winding around the innumerable hills of the town and disap-

pearing into thin air at the head of a ravine. The small trolley cars are open fore and aft, and their speed is moderate, so that it is possible to run and leap aboard one at almost any part of the downtown section. This got to be great sport with the Marines, but it was a hazardous one, for all traffic ran to the left, and the American had to unlearn all that he had learned in childhood of self preservation in the midst of traffic. It is a miracle that more of us weren't killed.

There was a leisurely air about the small city — it has little more than a hundred thousand people — that was in a way deceptive, for under the seeming leisure ran a busy and diversified commercial and industrial life. The seat of government is there, and that has tended to make the city more or less cosmopolitan, and in addition to that, the splendid landlocked harbor has made it a first class port and a center for imports and exports.

But those things were unimportant to us. All that mattered, so far as we were concerned, was that it was a quaint and a friendly place, and that the people in it made us feel that they enjoyed having us there. And we went in from our camps at every opportunity.

Anderson Park Hospital, where I fought out my first bout with the malaria, is — or was — a temporary military hospital built in a park, on a knob of a hill overlooking the center of the city and about

five minutes from it by trolley. It is a fine, clean, windy place, and one comes to it along the Tinakori Road, a winding street that curves across a saddle of the hill. It was ideal for us malarials, for after the preliminary violence of the illness was over, there came a period when we felt deceptively well and strong and were anxious to be up and out. The nearness of the city allowed us to go around without too great a tax on our strength, and the relaxation we got so did us far more good, mentally at least, than an enforced rest would have.

There was not an afternoon or an evening went by that I did not have visitors — by twos and threes they would come, stay a few minutes and talk quietly or sit, silent and friendly, at the foot of my bunk, and then slip off. And always, as they left, each of them would leave a small bag on the coverlet — fruit, sometimes, of strange and unheard-of kinds. There would be huge Chinese gooseberries, pale, translucent green, and delicate of taste; passion fruit, with its queer jelly-like meat; and odd little segmented oranges from Rarotonga. Sometimes there was home-made pastry and cake, and once there was a bag of huge English walnuts as large as tennis balls.

Many of my visitors became my very close friends later on, while others remained casual, pleasant acquaintances. All of them were connected, in one way



or another, with Ngati Poneke, and of them all, without a single exception, I have only the pleasantest of memories. They are too many to list, and if, in the pages that follow, I make mention in passing of this or that person without any attempt at further identification, it is only because there are so many that such a thing is impossible. Some of them, however, stood out beyond all the rest, for one reason or another, and these must be described.

Such, for instance, was old Tohuwa Parata, of Waikanae, the little hamlet on the bank of the river where I used to fish. He was by way of being leader of the Raukawa people of that neighborhood, and at the moment he was in Wellington doing some kind or another of essential war work. Tom, as he was called, was a large, strong man, in the neighborhood of sixty, I should say, and I shall never forget the first evening he came to see me. After shaking my hand as though it were an egg shell, he stood, large and quiet, at the side of my bunk. At long intervals he would speak, and always, when he did, there was thought behind what he said. But for the greater part of his visit he stood silent, and from him, like the light and heat from an open fire, there seemed to radiate a cloud of kindness and gentleness that made his very presence a healing agent.

His daughter, Waikuharu, was a woman of per-

happ thirty-five, and, like her father, she was large and strong. Like him, too, she was handsome — her head round and well shaped, with lovely eyes and dark, smooth, ruddy skin. Where Tom's hair was iron-grey and crinkly and close-cropped, Wai had the Polyneesian hair at its best, a long, thick, glossy black cloud, with the faintest possible hint of copper on the surface when the light struck it. They had much in common, did that father and his daughter. Each had a low, musical voice, and each spoke as though what he said was the result of thought and careful consideration. And yet always, running like a deep and faint undertone to even the more serious of their remarks, was a current of good humor that seemed always to threaten to break through at any moment — a musical, half-audible, chuckling rhythm that sometimes drowned out the words in a rush of bubbling laughter.

And there are others, too, who stand out in my memory. The three sisters Meri and Margaret and Laura, who had but part Maori blood, and Pirihira Heketa and her daughter Miriama, and Ngahue Puohotaua, a thoroughly typical Maori girl who was a howling demon on the hockey field — all appealed to me in some way aside from their frank, physical attraction. But all of them, whether I mention them here or not, still come and go in my memory as I sit and dream, and although names are slipping from

me, the face of each is as clear and fresh in my mind's eye as though I were newly come from one of the weekly meetings of the club.

### 3

The street that led from the hospital to the city came out on the quay in the midst of the government buildings, and at the intersection, in the middle of a little triangular park, stood a cenotaph to the memory of the dead of the First World War. A little to one side, away from the center of town stood an ancient row of brick buildings, and in the corner was my favorite shop. I think that I found it after only a few days in the country, and it appealed to me from the moment I set eyes on it, for I am easy prey to the man who deals in old silver and old pottery.

There was more to the shop than the antiques that filled it, however. McKenna, the proprietor, had in some way established contacts throughout the country that enabled him to secure a marvelous assortment of old native artifacts, and one entire window of the dingy old shop was filled with weapons and tools and ornaments. All of them were genuine, and all of them were old — many, indeed, date far back into the days before the advent of the white man. I was entranced by them, for the workmanship on even the tiniest ornament or the crudest tool showed that the maker

was, in addition to being a skilled worker, an artist at heart. The wooden handle to which a stone adze head was fastened, for the dubbing out of a canoe, would be as elaborately carved as the cover to one of the small treasure chests in which the old Maori kept his precious store of *kiwi* feathers or his greenstone ornaments. A fishhook would be as finely and as painstakingly carved and smoothed and polished as the cigar-shaped ear pendant next to it, and the little jadeite rings that were used on the legs of captive birds were as delicate as anything that ever came from the wheel of a lapidary.

It was the greenstone that finally took my entire attention, for while all the handwork of the Maori gave ample testimony to his skill, a skill acquired through centuries of development by his ancestors and through years of painstaking study by the individual, the greenstone craftsmanship is the most amazing of all. The material itself is properly a nephrite, I think, a dense, hard green stone that is found principally along a few streams on the west coast of the South Island. It occurs there in the deep ravines of the mountainous fiord country, and the outcroppings have been famous for centuries among the Polyne- sians. There is a legend that the earliest traveler to New Zealand found the stone and brought back to the northern islands the news of it, and that two axes

made from it, named Tutauru and Hau-hau-te-rangi, were used to fell and dub out the huge *totara* logs from which, in Rarotonga, the Arawa canoe and the others of the fleet were made for the emigration to Aotea-roa.

It is a very hard material, about as hard as quartz, and in color it varies from an opaque, milky green to a deep, translucent emerald shade with a hint of blue in it. Each variety has its own Maori name, but the two most prized are *inanga*, which is heavily flecked with white, and *tangiwai*, the deep, clear kind. The stone is *pounamu* generically, and from that word the South Island gets its native name, Te Wai Pounamu, the Greenstone River.

The old method of working the stone was laborious and primitive; the results obtained with that technique were incredible. The only way in which it could be cut was by the use of sand or sandstone and water, and by incredibly patient sawing and rubbing, small pieces were carved intact from the larger blocks, were shaped and carved and polished until the resulting ornament or tool was as smooth and softly rounded as though the work had been done by the most skilled of modern craftsmen with the most highly developed modern equipment.

Many things were made from it. Its fine grain — it is apparently cryptocrystalline — and its relatively

great hardness of perhaps 7 on the mineral hardness scale made it an ideal material for weapons and for tools. I once saw a large block of the stone that had been abandoned in one of the primitive workshop camping sites. The old *tohunga* who had begun to work on it had been in the midst of making a *mere*, a spatulate, sharp-edged war club, for the crude outline of that weapon was scored deeply into the surface on one side of the block. The grooves had been made by slow and painful sawing with thin slabs of sandstone, and were quite three-quarters of an inch deep, and the worker's plan was evidently to deepen them a fraction of an inch and then rive the shape from the parent mass. He was interrupted in his task, and no one knows who he was, but his unfinished work shows more clearly than any words could tell the arduous task he had set for himself.

Adzes for the working of wood were also made of *pounamu*, and in themselves were works of art, for not only were the cutting edges smooth and even and sharp, but the surfaces that had no function whatever were ground to an even smoothness and were then polished until they shone with a glassy luster. There is a strange similarity about all the adzes I saw, for while they varied in size from heavy tools of several pounds to tiny implements no larger than a cigarette,

the shape was always the same, and the proportions and angles were the same.

I spent many happy hours in the shop, for McKenna was a gregarious chap and one whose interest in the things he dealt in had brought him in contact with the people and their customs. When he understood that I was interested only in authentic artifacts, no matter how crude or unfinished they might be, he took me under his wing and taught me, as well as he could, what he knew of the old processes of manufacture, where the different materials were got, and the differences in the various grades of *pounamu* and how to recognize them. He advised me on everything I bought, and several times he gave over the chance of making a sale because the object I had chosen was not authentic old hand-work.

## 4

In the end I had many small things, pendants and *pekapekas* and *tikis*, and all of them were genuine. And gradually, because they seemed to be so much a part of the country and the people and the traditions of that people, I returned them, one by one, to the Maoris who were so hospitable to me. It has seemed to me always to be a shame to despoil a country of something that belongs intimately and inseparably to

that country, and the greenstone ornaments and tools are peculiarly and specifically Maori. In that land and among that people they have a definite place. They fit into the traditions of the Maori, and they serve as an enduring link with his artistic past. They outlast the textile work and the feather cloaks and even the wood carving. They are a living part of his history, and he should keep them. In the end, I kept one tiny, exquisite chisel of opaque *pounamu*, whose edges and surfaces were as clean and highly polished as though they had just come from the wheel of a lapidary, except at the butt, where the constant light blows of a whalebone mallet had clipped it slightly and polished it even more perfectly than the surfaces.

## 5

As I write, there is a cold, fine rain falling, and the ragged grey clouds are scurrying along at little more than tree-top height. And that makes it easy to write of Wellington and of the hills around it, for always, during that winter, it had either just rained, was raining, or was about to rain. The moisture and the grey-ness and the caressing touch of a Scotch mist on the face, the soft rhythm of rain on the roof and the window, and the swishing of traffic on wet asphalt — all these bring up a picture of the wet and shining roofs of houses built into the sides of the hills and the pre-



It was late in the afternoon, and the grey clouds were like soiled cotton wool on the tops of the hills. The rain was falling slowly and persistently and softly, and the wind that rushed up Cook Strait and across the harbor and up the hillside carried with it a hint of the grey seas and the barren ice fields far to the south. I walked slowly up the hill, searching for the number, and the wet bricks and the wet asphalt glowed dully in the late afternoon twilight.

“E, Hone. Come in, Hone,” and I followed her dark figure into the black corridor and from there to a little living room. I sighed contentedly, for there was a coal fire going in the fireplace and a half-smoked cigarette lay smoking on the hearth. It was a room that was lived in, and it was warm. There was no

light, except the warm glow from the fire and the fast-fading light from the two high old windows, and the darkness that lurked in the corners only made the warm circle before the fire more enticing.

Mrs. Heketa offered me a chair, but I waved it away and sat on the mat before the fire, for I could see that she was at work there and I wanted to watch. The fire was warm as it struck my cheek and my shoulder.

"*Taniko*, Hone," and she held up a piece of work for me to see. "You see this before, Hone?"

"No, Mama. I'll watch for a while, and then you tell me how you do it."

"Well, Hone, I make a belt for one of the boys. See, Hone, like this." And she made several quick knots in the black and gold cord. "Easy, isn't it, Hone?" But for the time being I was more interested in the old woman than in the belt, and as she worked I watched her.

Like my friend Hopaea, she was small and slender and erect, and her head was well placed on her shoulders. Her hands also were small and quick and graceful, but aside from that, there was little similarity between the two. Where Hopaea was gentle and quiet and reserved, there was a quick, incisive quality about Pirihiira that told of a difference of background, and while Hopaea's English was perfect, except for an

undercurrent of richness in the vowel sounds, when Pirihira spoke, the Maori idioms and pronunciation crept in and made her speech picturesque and strange, and I never tired of hearing it.

She was a fine looking old woman, and as I saw more and more of the native women of her generation, I came to think of her as the arch-type, in appearance, of them all. To begin with, she came from a part of the country that has preserved, more than most parts, the old customs and traditions. For instance, she wore the *moko*, the graceful scroll work tattooing on the chin and around her lips. It added a strange sort of dignity to her strong, lean face; it was entirely in keeping with the long, thick braids of hair that hung over each shoulder almost to her waist and with the brilliance of her dark eyes. The fire light made her brown cheeks glow with a rich golden undertone, and it brought out the hint of copper in her hair, for Mama also was *urukehu*.

The twilight deepened, and the grey of the windows grew darker until there was no light but the ruddy glow of the coals in the little brick fireplace, but Pirihira's hands kept up their steady, rhythmic movement, and the belt grew row by row. Now and again she would light a cigarette, take three or four quick puffs, and snap off the glowing end with a flick of the

thumbnail. Then she would toss the butt to one side and resume her work, and as she worked she talked in a steady, soothing monotone.

“You going to stay for tea, Hone? Miriama come home soon, she just work down the hill a bit, she be home soon. Te Aroha, you know, we call her Lovey, Te Aroha that mean love, Hone, well, she come home pretty quick, too. Then we have tea, Hone. You stay, e, Hone.”

The soft words and the soft monotonous voice lulled me into a comfortable sort of drowsiness, and I lay back against the side of the fireplace, where the warm radiations of the fire soaked into me and made me wish that I need never get up, for I was still weak from the fever. And suddenly it came to me that for the first time in years there was no reason why I should have to get up at any given moment — and the sense of comfort deepened with the realization. I slept.

## 6

I awoke with the ease with which I had fallen asleep, and I glanced up to see that there were now two more people before the fire, on the mat. Miriama and Te Aroha had come home while I slept, and now they smiled at me and accepted cigarettes. Mama rose in one smooth movement from where she had been

Miriama and Te Aroha were cousins, but for the life of me I could see no resemblance between them as they sat side by side and gazed into the fire. Miriama, Pirihiira's daughter, was the older of the two, and like her mother she was small and erect. Her large, full breasts stood out distinctly under a finely knit black sweater, and her shoulders were square and strong. She carried her head well, and her small well-shaped features were calm. She looked as though she could have done with more sun and open air, for her face was pale, but in spite of that she had the air of being a vigorous and active young woman — as indeed she was, for she was a magnificent dancer, an accomplished ballet dancer as well, and she was poetry in motion when she danced in the action songs of her people.

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was rarely. It seemed to me that she was of more delicate build than her cousin, but there was a hint of sturdiness in the way her arms were rounded and in the set of her chin.

I was still watching them intently when Pirihira came in with the tea. And then we fell to, the lot of us, sitting easy and informally in a semicircle on the mat. We ate and smoked and talked, and after we had drunk all the tea in the big earthenware pot on the hearth, Pirihira took up her *taniko* work again, and Miriama, Aroha, and I sat and watched her slim fingers and her intent, expressive old face. We were silent then, for the food and the warmth of the fire had made us all drowsy, but it was a friendly and comfortable sort of a silence, the kind that one hesitates to break.

## 7

Many times, during the next fortnight, I went back to the little room, and always there was a fire and tea and the quiet, soothing voice of the old woman to answer my questions or to gossip about the girls in the club or the people of her tribe up near Hastings. She was always ready and anxious to tell me the things I wanted to know, for after Miriama, her greatest pride was her *maoritanga*, her "Maoriness." And I think she understood that my questions came from a sincere wish to know more of the people of her race, for

she never hesitated to answer any question I put to her.

There was one question, for instance, that had been on the tip of my tongue for months — the question of cannibalism in the old Maori culture. I knew, from reading, that it had been quite the order of the day a shade over a century ago, for the legends and the songs and the written history of the country are full of references to it. It was obvious that the practice was one of long standing in the race, for there was a wealth of native words pertaining to anatomical details that apparently could have come from no other source. It was a thing that I wanted to know more about, but also it seemed to me a subject that I could hardly speak about unless the matter was referred to by the Maori first. To my surprise, it was Pirihira who first brought it up.

We had been talking about the old days and about customs that had died out, and her casual reference to the old Maori's culinary peculiarities came as part of a story that she was telling me of the old tribal wars.

“When my grandfather was young boy, Hone, 'bout sixteen I think, he go out once with the men of the tribe for hunting, Hone, way back up in the hills. Pretty soon he got lost up there, Hone, he go away in the woods and get away from the others. People from another tribe come and find him, Hone, a tribe

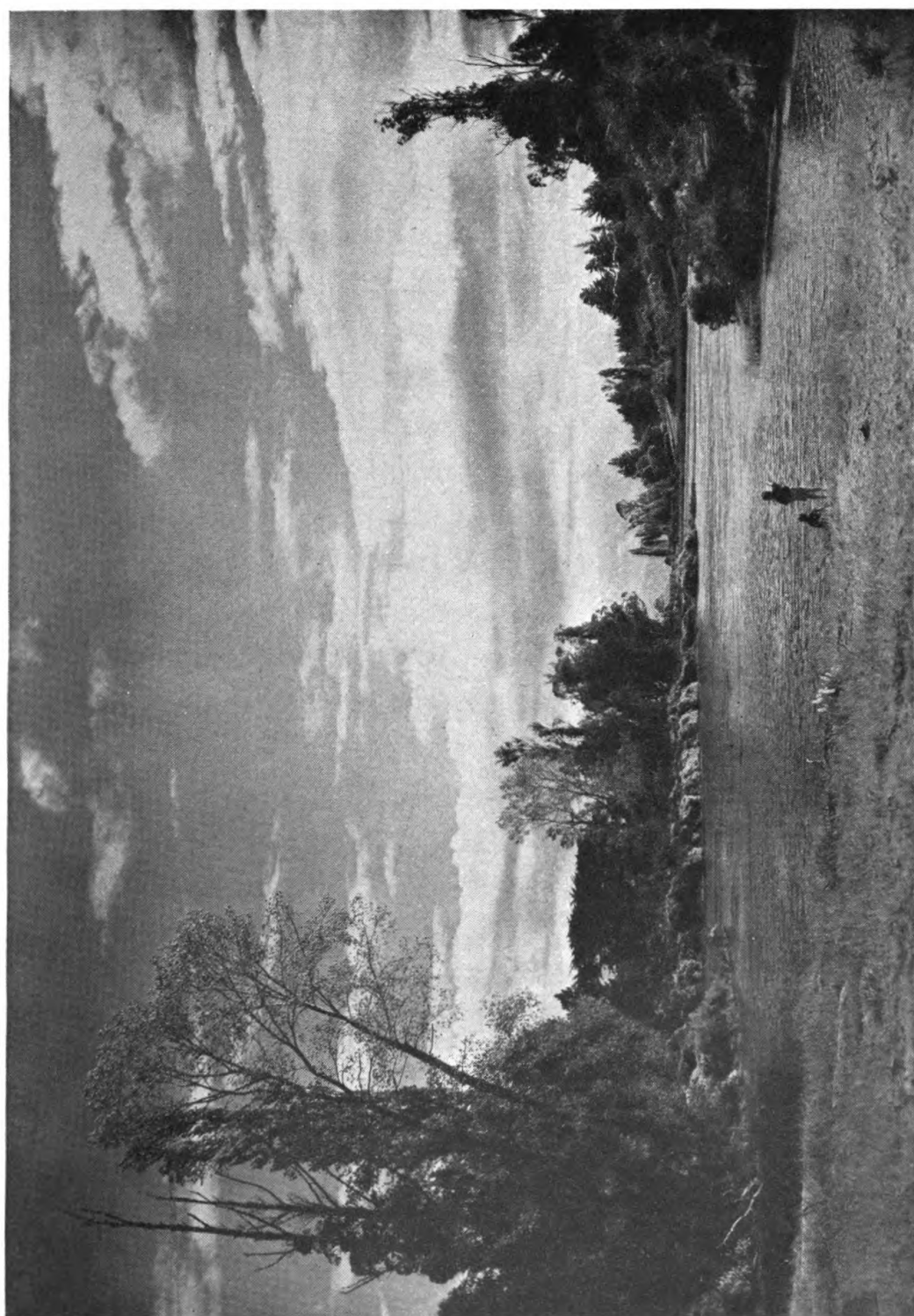
that fight with his tribe. And they catch him and take him up the hills to their *pa*, Hone — you know, their fort where they live. They put him inside the *pa* high up on top of the hill, Hone, and the women of the tribe they watch him.

“Now this *pa* a funny place, Hone. Right on top the hill, high up, and hill go straight down on one side, Hone, like, you know, cliff. Way down. Round that side of the *pa* they don’t have wall, Hone, cause nobody come up there — very high. So they put my grandfather over there, near the cliff, and the women light fire in the *umu*, in the oven.

“My grandfather scared, Hone. He know they going to eat him, and he begin to think, Hone, he think hard. He see there no fence around where he is, and he go over there, bit by bit, till he near the edge. Then he sit down, Hone, and he pick up little rock, careful, so nobody see him. Then he toss it over the edge and listen. No noise. Oh-oh, that bad, he think. Then he do it again. Still no noise.

“All this time the oven get hot, Hone, and pretty soon he see it almost ready. The women see, too, and they laugh and pick up club and start to come over to kill him and fix him for oven. Then he really scared, Hone, and he pick up another little rock and drop it over the edge in another place. This time he hear it hit in some bushes, and then he laugh, too,





*“Waikato . . . witch-craft in that part of the country”*



cause he know everything all right. And when the women come up with big club and laughing at him, he laugh again and let them get near. Then he jump, Hone, he jump over where he drop last rock.

“He drop in the bushes, Hone, and get all scratched. But he stay there and rest, Hone, cause he know it take them a long time to get around there. Then he get up and go home. He smart, e, Hone?”

Thereafter, I wasn't afraid to ask questions, and I did so whenever one occurred to me.

Pirihira was Maori of the Maoris, there was no doubt of that, and sometimes, when she was telling some little incident of her early life among the Ngati-Kahungunu, her tribesmen, she would unconsciously let fall some little detail that would reveal more of the habit of thought of her people than would a learned volume of description.

One evening, when she and I and Miriama were sitting around the fire, she was telling us more of her early life. There were meetings with old friends, with lists of those friends; there were tales of journeys to visit other tribes and of the hospitality that was shown. And there was a tale of a picnic that had been held when Miriama was a youngster. An interesting enough story, about a picturesque spot in a part of the country where her ancestors had lived many years before, near a huge old waterfall. And then she spoke

of something else — and Miriama started to say something, but thought better of it and kept silent.

Several days later, in the afternoon, I came across Miriama as she left the government office where she worked. As she walked toward me, I decided to try out what I knew of her tongue.

*“E ko, tena koe, tena koe. Ki hea te haere ai? Haere mai, haere mai ki te kai.”* She stopped short and began to laugh.

“E, Hone, that’s fine. Where did you learn that? Did you know you had asked me to have something to eat?”

“Well, aren’t you hungry?”

And away we went to one of those marvelous shops that have a large Welsh cabinet just inside the door, piled high with thin bread sandwiches and cakes and pastry, where one can pile his plate high, sit down at a small table and drink as much tea as a man can hold. Some obscure law apparently makes it impossible for there to be a higher charge than sixpence per person, or it may be that the cashier can’t count higher than that, for never have I succeeded in paying more than a shilling for the two. We filled our plates and chose a table and began to talk.

“Oh, Hone — do you remember that Mama was telling you about the picnic we had once, a long time

ago? Well a funny thing happened there that day, something I thought you'd like to know.

"You see, Hone, Mama is very much one of the old Maoris — even more than you'd think. If you don't think so, ask her some time to tell you about Waikato. Well, on this picnic, we went to see the waterfall. It's a pretty place, in a kind of a valley, and under the fall there was a big pool.

"It was in the afternoon when we got there, and after we had walked around we went and looked at the pool. All at once a little bit of a cloud, a sort of a mist, went across the face of the fall, and just then I was looking at Mama and I saw she was crying to herself, very soft and quiet. I asked her what the matter was, and she pointed to the mist and said there was a *taniwha*, a kind of old spirit, in the pool and the *taniwha* was sad because it had been so long since any of Mama's family had been there to visit. Mama said *taniwha* was crying and it made her feel sad, too, so she was crying, Hone."

"And what was this about Waikato, Miri? Isn't there supposed to be witchcraft in that part of the country?" I had read hints of that, here and there, but this seemed to be the first chance I'd had of learning of it first hand.

"Oh, she saw something there once, when she was

I didn't press the thing at all, because something told me that the tale would be more picturesque if it came from the lips of the old lady, and I agreed that it would be a good idea to go see the girls practice the songs and dances. We went back home and had more tea and set out for the meeting room.

Ngati Poneke, the Children of Wellington, met weekly, on Monday nights, in a large clubroom in downtown Wellington. The meetings had two purposes at that time — they provided a time and a place for young people and old people of Maori blood to meet and to sing and to dance, to talk over matters that pertained to the Maoris, and to get that queer, pleasant, undefinable sense of uplift that one gets from associating with his own people. Also, the meetings served as rehearsals for the programs which those tireless and hardworking folk gave weekly for the benefit of the American troops who were in camps and in hospitals near by. They were a treat to me, those weekly meetings, for there was an informal air of complete friendliness about the group that made it impossible to feel anything but at home among them. I suspected at first that it was the novelty of the sur-

roundings and the people that drew me, but after a few visits I began to notice that several Pakeha New Zealanders came also, time after time, and then I realized that it was not curiosity that drew us but rather a sincere liking for the people and their music and dancing.

This gathering began as did all of them. Old Kingi strode to the center of the floor, spoke once in a low tone, and all the members, old and young, formed in a group facing him. He raised his hand, let it fall, and they began to sing — and for the next two hours there was one song after another, one dance following another, in an apparently endless chain.

Kingi Tahiwī, the *kaumatua*, the old leader, was one of the wisest and most adroit handlers of young people that I have ever seen, which really is strange, for his methods were reminiscent of those of Simon Legree. He bullied the girls and women, he brow-beat them, he was grudging of praise and liberal with invective — and they ate it up. Time and again I have heard them complain that he was worse than the galley masters of old Greek and Roman days of which they had read, and one of them said to me once that it must be wonderful to live in the United States where slavery was outlawed — but always they came back for more. They loved him and would do anything for him.

Also, they shared a grief with him, and although he never mentioned it in so many words, I think that he knew they shared it and that it was made softer for him thereby. At my second or third trip to the club, I had noticed that there was a pair of songs that were sung always in the same order, and one always followed the other without an interval. The first of them was a marching song, a European air that was changed in tempo and interval until it had a strange and stirring rhythm that fit the Maori words perfectly. Its words said goodby to a famous Maori contingent and reminded them of the reputation of the ancestors that was theirs to uphold. The words were as stirring as the music, and they did the same thing to the hair on my nape that bagpipe music does.

The second song was a plaintive, sad thing, and I noticed that the girls, when they sang it, left off all the sly horseplay that was carried on throughout the rest of the program. They sang it seriously and well, and their expressions seemed to say that the words which they sang came from their hearts. Someone told me once that as they sang they remembered Kingi and his son — and then I understood.

For Kingi's son, a fine young man who had been the outstanding scholar of his year at the university, had disappeared in the sea near Greece in the dark days of Greece and Crete, when the Maori Battalion,



with its companion troops, was fighting bitterly for every foot of land. He was a fighter pilot, and since no definite proof of his death was found, old Kingi hoped, fiercely and persistently, that he would come back. And all of us, knowing in our hearts that young Kingi was gone, supported him in his hope and never voiced the faintest of doubts.

And the girls, each of whom had a relative to mourn, sang a song for Kingi, and because it is, in itself, a lovely thing and because of its associations, I give it here as it was sung there, with a translation.

*Haere ra, e tama!*  
*Haere ra, e tama, ka hoki mai,*  
*Kei wareware, e te ipo, e!*  
*Kei hei ra kua ngaro nei*  
*I te ao, i te po.*  
*Mapu kau te manawa,*  
*E te tau, kua ngaro nei.*  
*E tangi ra te manawa —*  
*Tenei ra, e tama, te aroha, e!*

Goodbye, son.  
 Goodbye, son, come back again,  
 Do not forget who loves you  
 And who is lonely for you  
 By night, by day.  
 My heart sighs for you  
 Who have gone away.  
 And my heart cries out,  
 Here, son, is my love.

Never after I had fitted the picture together in my mind, could I listen to the song without wanting to howl like a wolf, for I loved old Kingi.

## 9

And now I get a bit ahead of my tale, but the link-up is close and now is as good a time as any to tell it. One night, many months later, I arrived at the hall to see several stocky, quiet young Maoris in khaki talking to the girls, and I knew that some of the men were home from North Africa. I stood to one side and watched them as they talked, the young men and the young women, exchanging news of friends and cousins and brothers. Then old Kingi walked to the center of the floor — and Witerina-te-Miria-rangi whispered in my ear that he had heard from the government that very day that his son must be considered dead. He spoke to the young newcomers.

“It is good to see you, home from the front. You have been away for three years now, and it is good to see you return. Welcome.

“Today they have told me that I must not hope any longer, that my son is dead, that I must not hope for his return. Be that as it may, I welcome you. Our girls welcome you — come and dance with them.”

I took my cap and went out to the street and walked

several blocks in the driving rain so that I'd have an explanation of the moisture on my cheek.

## 10

The malaria was recurrent, and for a year and a half after the first attack I was never free of it, and it meant that most of my latter stay in New Zealand found me in one or the other of the two hospitals we maintained there. Also, it meant that my entire time was spent where I could visit my friends whenever I had the mind to do so. I became a regular visitor at the house on the Tinakori Road, and I had long talks and bitter arguments with Pirihira — and we both enjoyed them thoroughly.

I don't think that she ever quite realized that we American officers were so well paid that we could do things that only the rare well-to-do New Zealander could afford, and when I took the girls of the club out to tea, one after another, or to dinner, or when I invited a whole group of them to come out for a bite after the weekly meeting of the club, she railed at me.

"E, Hone, why you spend your money on those girls? You foolish, Hone, they all think you foolish. Why you do it, e, Hone?"

"Just because I like to, Mama. Don't you think that's a good enough reason?"

“E, Hone, you a fool — all those girls play you for fool, Hone.”

“Well, maybe I don’t mind being played for a fool, Mama. I have a good time with them, and if any one of them thinks that she is being smart by fooling me, the joke’s really on her, isn’t it?”

“E, Hone, you worse than a Maori for arguing. You got no sense at all.”

“That’s right, Mama — stupid but happy. Oh yes,” and I took a little piece of greenstone from my pocket and held it out for her to see. “I bought this today from McKenna. Is it a good one?”

She took the lovely little cigar-shaped pendant and turned it over and over in her slender hand. She felt of it with her finger tips and rubbed it lightly against her cheek, and she held it up to the light.

“Hone, that’s a good one, it awful old, Hone, way before the Pakeha come. It called *tangiwai*, Hone, that’s good *pounamu*. The men used to wear it for earring, Hone, and sometime the woman let the baby chew on it to cut teeth.”

“Well, I’m glad it’s a good one Mama, because I wouldn’t want to give one of the girls anything cheap,” and I waited for the scream of rage that I knew was coming.

“Give that to one of those girls! Hone, you a damn

fool." And then she glared at me and muttered to herself as though words had failed her.

"What's the matter with you, Pirihiro? If I want to give a present to someone I like, is that anyone's business but my own?" I tried to roar as she had, for I wanted to work her into a rage and listen to her language become salty and picturesque and hear her pungent and direct remarks.

She leaned forward at that, and her eyes glittered in the light of the fire. She gazed at me for a long minute, and then she almost hissed at me.

"E, Hone, tell me one thing, Hone. Tell me now. Don' lie to me, Hone. You monkeying around with one of those girls, Hone?"

"E, Pirihiro, what difference does it make if I am? Don't you like that? They're pretty girls, you know, Mama, and I'm a long way from home. Anyway," I said, "I bought this for my favorite." And I leaned over and tied it around her neck.

She sat back and looked at me again, and as she looked at me one hand crept up and stroked the little green bauble softly. Then she chuckled gently.

"For me, e, Hone. Hone, it just like I said. You a damn fool, e, Hone." And she picked up the half-smoked butt of a cigarette, lit it, and went on with her *taniko* work.

“I say, Mama,” I said after watching her for some time. “How did you happen to have a *moko*? Did all the young women have them where you came from?”

“Most of ’em, Hone. My aunt, she had a fine one, and when I was young girl, I said to myself, I get one, too. But the minister up there, he just hate it, Hone, and if any of the girls even talk about getting one, he give them the devil, Hone.

“Well, Hone, one day I hear there’s a good *tohunga* in the town, he know how to do the *moko* real fine, Hone, so all of a sudden I take the horse and the little buggy and I go in to the town and get the *moko* done. Then I go home, and it’s all right. My aunt say it’s a good one, Hone. Then somebody say I must go on an errand to the minister’s house, Hone, and I’m scared, ’cause I know he going to be mad. So while I’m going over, I think hard, Hone, and when I get there, I wrap my scarf around my face and knock at the door.

“He want to know what the trouble is, Hone, and I tell him I got a bad toothache, and I mumble when I talk, because my lip’s all swelled up and sore, Hone, and anyway I can’t talk plain like that. So I tell him I got a bad toothache, and everything all right.

“Then I go away for a while and I don’t see him for some time. Then I go to a *hui*, a big meeting, and my face all fine now, and the *moko* look good and I’m

“But when he come up, he rub noses with me, the *hongi*, you know, Hone, and then he begin to call out the names of the dead like we always do when we meet old friends, and I know everything all right. But when he going away again he look hard at me and say, ‘Toothache, eh? Huh.’ So I think I don’t fool him, e, Hone?”

## 11

One afternoon, as I was walking up the long, curving quay that was once the waterfront and now lies some distance inland, I saw a small, familiar figure hurrying along through the mist. It was Te Aroha, and her arms were piled with books, for she had just come from the university. She was hurrying along with her head slightly bent against the wind, and as she nearly crashed into me, I could see the tiny drops of moisture that beaded her inky-black hair. I stopped short before her, and she drew up, startled.

“Oh. Hello.” She smiled a little, and then her face fell back into the mournful lines that had made me wonder when I first saw her before the fire on Tina-kori Road.

“Oh, I’m just going along home. It’s such a beastly night, isn’t it?” It came to me suddenly that that was the longest speech I’d heard from her; her voice seemed to match her face and her manner to perfection, for it was low and soft and musical, and there was an undertone of sorrow in it that was the look in her eyes made audible. I felt uncomfortable in the presence of it, uncomfortable and helpless — and then I thought of the little pendant that I had bought, an hour or so before, from my friend McKenna. Impulsively I pulled it from the pocket of my raincoat and held it out to her.

“Oh,” she said again, “for me?” And she looked at it and at me, startled. I said nothing, but stood with my hand stretched out toward her, feeling a little conspicuous. People hurried by in a steady stream to each side of us, but we were as alone as though the city had been deserted. I looked steadily at her, and she let her eyes fall. Then, timidly and slowly, her hand crept up and grasped the lovely warm little piece of stone, she took it and held to it as though she were afraid I’d snatch it back.

Her hand fell to her side, and she looked up. Then she raised it slowly and opened it and looked at the gift. She seemed to be looking long and carefully, as



though she were appraising it, but when I glanced at her face, I could see that her eyes were closed.

“Thank you,” she said at last, and she spoke so low that I could scarcely hear her, but the spell of silence was broken, and I took a firm grasp of her elbow and steered her to one of the tiny tea shops that lie near Whitcombe and Tombs. We went in and selected a cheering heap of sandwiches and pastry, sat at a table, and ordered tea. And while it was on the way, I took my first real look at Te Aroha.

I sometimes think, as I turn my eyes to the past and dream of what they see there, that if I were to pick one face that most clearly called up before me everything that I understand to be Maori, that face would be Te Aroha's. For she was a beautiful girl without being a pretty one; her features were strong and fine, and in them, as in the finest of the old wood carvings, there ran a hint of a primitive strength and directness, a beauty that depended for its existence upon an inner quality that shone out through it, like sunlight through stained glass.

Her picture is here before me as I write this; it is a photograph taken by some child of nature who has not been imbued with the idea that the sitter for a portrait must above all things put on a *risus horrendus*. She is looking at a spot a bit over my right shoulder, and her eyes are somber, but the sadness has

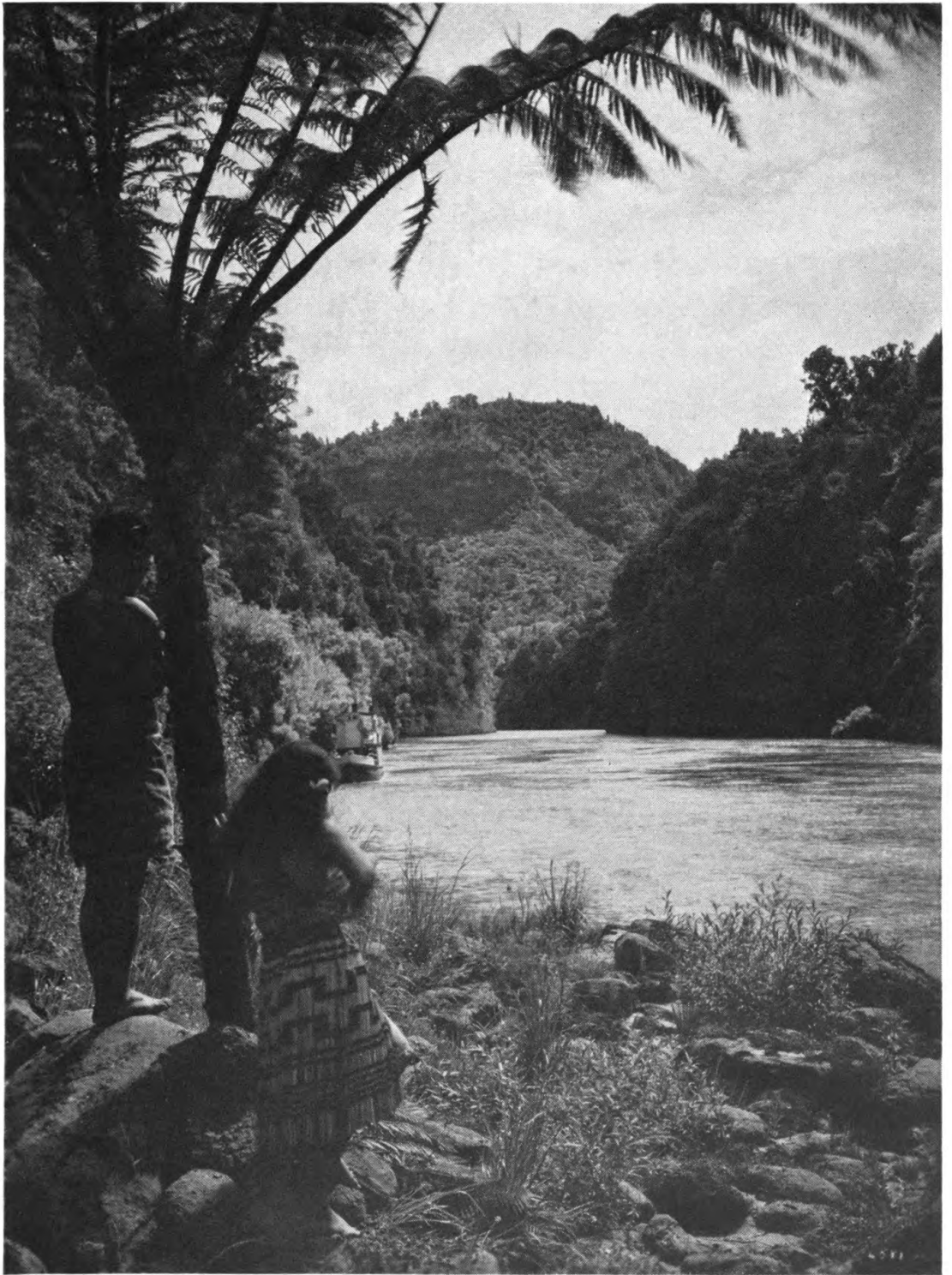
gone from them. She is not smiling — her lips are in their natural line, and there is a strength about them and about the set of her chin. Her nose is short and straight and a little blunt, and that, with the way the line of her jaw comes in to her chin tells me that her son will be a fighter.

We drank the tea and I paid the tiny bill and we went out into the friendly, misty evening. And it seemed to me that the weight that was pressing down on her had lifted a little, and that she was a bit more lively, as a girl of her age should be. She smiled when we said goodby at the corner, and I watched her as she went away homeward, her stride long and sure and free-hipped, as though she had lived most of her life barefoot.

## 12

“Hello, Hone. *Tena koe. E noho mai ra.*” Pirihiira was in her tiny dining room at the back of the house, busy at her interminable handwork, and she nodded at an empty chair as she spoke. I sat there as she had told me to do, and I stretched my muscles in the glow of a little electric heater, for the day was raw and cold and windy, and the rain was coming down in sheets. The warmth soaked into me, and I sat and watched her as she worked.

This time it was not *taniko* she was making, for



*North Island scene*



piled up on the floor at her side was a heap of what looked to be the leaves of long bulrushes, four feet long at least, and on her lap was a narrow board perhaps thirty inches long. One strip of leaf, which I recognized as flax, was laid out on the board, and Pirihiira was scraping away at it with a sharp clam shell. I could see that she was removing the fleshy surface of the strip and exposing the fibers, but I couldn't imagine what the object was. I asked her.

"*Piu-piu*, Hone — you know that skirt the girls wear. *Piu-piu* we call it, that the noise it make when they dance, Hone. See — " and she lifted one down from the wall and shook it gently. The soft rustling sound did indeed sound like the onomatopoeic name, and when I smiled and nodded, she went on with her work and explained it to me as she scraped.

"First we have to cut a lot of leaves, Hone, they got to be all one size, Hone, all the same kind of *harakeke*. If I make a good skirt, Hone, you know — nice and thick, a good skirt, I cut five, six hundred of them. That a lot of work, e, Hone?" I agreed, and she went on.

"Then I got to strip them off, Hone, so they all the same size, one just as wide as the other. Then I sit down and figure out what kind of pattern I want." I nodded again, for I recalled that the skirts I had seen

were woven on geometric designs of large crosses and rectangles and triangles. "Then I count how many strips must be scrape off here and here and here," and she showed me that the board was marked off at regular intervals with a series of scratches, and I saw that she was using it as a sort of template. "Then I go to work, Hone, and I scrape off some of them this way, so those threads show for a couple inches, then up here so they show pretty much, then down here just a little bit. I leave all the rest of the leaf just like it is, Hone, I don't touch it at all clear down to the bottom, Hone. But up here, see," and she indicated the upper twelve inches or so, "I clean him all off up here, Hone, so I can weave the belt part."

She worked and scraped for a few minutes in silence, and I watched her strong, slender little hands as they drew the clam shell carefully back and forth, exposing the silky fibers without cutting them. Her movements were direct and sure and sparing. There was no waste motion.

"When I get a lot of them scraped, then I heat a big kettle of water real hot, Hone, and I put 'em all in for a few minutes. Just a little while, Hone, in the hot water. Then I hang 'em up in the sun, I let 'em dry in the sun, Hone. Then the leaf curl up round, Hone, it curl up and turn yellow and get real hard.

See, Hone," and she took down the finished *piu-piu* from the wall again and held out one strand for me to see.

The unscraped part of the leaf had indeed "curled up round," for it looked like a quill, one-quarter of an inch in diameter and the color of old, yellow-brown ivory, and the surface was as hard as tortoise shell. The short lengths of the silky exposed fibers, however, were sooty black, and each individual strand of the skirt looked like a series of porcupine quills of varying lengths threaded on untwisted black silk cord.

"You know how I make that black, Hone?" Piri-hira pointed to the fibers and chuckled. "Hone, you don't know how I do that. Hone, I bury it in black mud from a swamp, right under the mud, Hone, I let it stay maybe two or three days. Then I take it out all muddy, Hone, and I wash it and dry it in the sun again. And you know, Hone, that color never come out. Funny, e, Hone."

She made a cup of tea for each of us, and as we were drinking it Miriama came in, and a little later Te Aroha joined us. We drank more tea, ate some cakes, and then went to the weekly meeting of the club.

"Hello, Mama. Are the girls home yet?" And I

threw my wet raincoat over the back of a chair near the door of the kitchen.

“Not yet, Hone, they a little late, they be here soon, e, Hone. What you got there, Hone?” she asked as she saw the little stick I had in the pocket of my raincoat.

“Just a little swagger stick. I tried to carve one like Pine Taiapa was carrying, but it looks like the devil, Pirihira.”

“Heh-heh, Hone — *tekoteko* always look like the devil, e, Hone. That mean you do it right. Lemme see it, e, Hone.”

I wasn't proud of it at all, for after I had completed it and compared it with the mental picture I had of the one that Pine had carved I had felt humble. It had seemed such a simple task — the carving out of several grooves around the eyes, the blunt and stubby nose, the distended lips and the protruding tongue — there was nothing difficult or complicated about any one of the details, but when I finished, I saw how sadly I had erred in proportion and relief. I had tried, during the long hours in the hospital, to recall every detail that I had seen and to put it in its correct place, but the suspicion had been growing in my mind the whole time that while I might remember the individual details, I had no idea of the meaning of each of them nor any idea of the relation-



ship of one to the other. So I watched Pirihiira and waited for her criticism.

She looked it over deliberately and she examined every cut and groove. Finally she began to speak, in the low, singing, monotonous tone that she used when her thoughts were on some incident of the past, when she was reminiscing as much for her own pleasure as for my own.

“ In old days, Hone, when a girl learn about *taniko* and learn how to make mats, she learn early in the morning, Hone, before the sun come up. Always one old woman in the village, she know all that work and she *tapu* and the house *tapu*, e, Hone. Same with man, Hone, old *tohunga* teach young boy how to carve and how to do *moko* and the *tohunga*, he *tapu*, some-time *tapu* so strong that he can't touch food and a little girl have to feed him, e, Hone.”

I watched her and listened, not daring to speak, for her face was dreamy, and her brilliant old eyes were staring ahead and a little downward as she spoke. The old Maori speaks in circles, and to me at least his point was never clear until, at the last phrases of his speech, he would pounce upon it from an entirely unsuspected angle. So I listened quietly to Pirihiira and tried to guess where the threads would lead.

“When I was a young girl, Hone, I learn all these things. I know how to make *taniko* and work flax, you

see me make *taniko*, Hone, you see me fix flax for *piu-piu*. I know what tree make things yellow and where I get stuff to make it black and red. We make oil for our hair in the old days, Hone, we take fat from big bird and heat it many times and make it clear and nice. Then we take little flowers off a low bush, I don't know what you call it in English and we put them in the oil, we put lots of them in and we heat it again. Then we use it on our hair and it smell nice."

Her voice grew lower and lower, and the singing, monotonous tone grew more pronounced, so that what she was saying seemed almost a recitative. Also, native words and phrases came more and more often and I found that I could understand them well because I knew the context.

"One of the old canoes land on the South Island, on Te Waipounamu, you can still see big hole in the beach where it land, Hone, and that little bush grow all over there. But funny thing, Hone, only bushes on one side have flowers that smell — the other side, no smell at all.

"The old times funny, Hone. Maori people funny, too, 'cause they remember old time, they remember real well. And they feel sad about old time.

"One time I go to Wairoa, Hone, you know Wairoa, e, Hone, I go to see my cousin, he's boy of my

father's old brother. And I don' see him for many years, Hone, and so when I see him on the *marae*, Hone, I sit down on the ground and I cry, Hone, 'cause I begin to remember old time and my dead grandfather and the dead *tupuna*, and so I sit there on the *marae* and cry, in front of all those people, e, Hone," and she repeated it in Maori to herself, dreamily, "and I saw the faces of the dead ancestors, and I sat in the courtyard before all those people, crying there, in the courtyard."

She was quiet then, and so was I, but the picture she had called up was a real one to me as I sat there, as the faces of her dead ancestors had been to her, and the thought came to me that if I had been Maori and had gone to a strange *marae*, I should have done as she did.

"So I like the old things, Hone, I learn the old things. I learn to make mats, Hone, and the first mat I make, it's not so good, Hone, but I give it to the head man anyway, to the chief, 'cause it's the first one I make. "

She stopped there, and went over to the stove to make tea, and as she moved back and forth, with her long, full, dark skirt almost hiding her small feet and her copper-shot dark hair in braids down her back she made only an occasional remark, generally in answer to a question. Then she came back to the

table and picked up the stick again. Finally her eye caught one tiny detail, and she chuckled.

“E, Hone, I guess you get to be Maori, all right, you don’t leave that out. That right, Hone, that got to be there. E, Hone, that a good stick.”

All at once, and from no definite sequence of thought, one of her phrases came back to me — “but I give it to the head man anyway, to the chief, ’cause it’s the first one I make.” And I decided to follow the Maori pattern of speech.

“Pirihira, are we going to the club tonight?”

“Sure, Hone, we always go Monday night.”

“Pirihira, old Tohuwa Parata must be the head man of the people around here — the people from Otaki on this way, I mean, isn’t he?”

“Yes, I think he the highest ranking man here, Hone.”

Then she looked at me and grinned, for she saw what I was getting at.

“E, Hone, he going to like that, Hone.”

And as a matter of fact I gave it to the large and quiet old man that very evening, and he took it gravely and looked it over as had Pirihira, long and carefully and dreamily, as though he were trying to go behind the workmanship and the carving itself and back into the mind of the one who had done it, to understand what thought and what idea had caused the



carver to set the eyes at that particular angle and why he had decided upon two ridges here instead of three. Then he spoke, as gravely as he had looked.

“Captain, my son and my grandsons and their sons will treasure this.”

Up to this time, early in August of 1943, my relationship with the girls and the women of the Maoris had been one of a deep, warm, and entirely sexless friendship. This was not at all deliberate on my part or, I think, on theirs. It just happened to be that way, and by and large the condition satisfied me quite well. I knew that if and when I established myself in a more intimate way with any one of them, I stood to lose something of the freedom of movement among them that I was presently enjoying.

It was not that there was any prejudice against a liaison on their part. I knew several of our men who had taken one or another of the girls to live with him, and in all cases it worked out well. There was no attempt at concealment, and the situation was accepted as quite the natural thing. The girls seemed to be as faithful as though there had been a marriage ceremony, and as far as I could determine, they lost no reputation in the eyes of their own people.

One rather attractive affair developed between young Marion, the baby of the club, and a very young

and clean-cut youngster from one of the Marine outfits near Wellington. Ray was at the club meetings as often as I, and something about his youth and looks and disposition caused him to be taken in by the whole group from Kingi down to Marion and to be mothered by them. By common consent, it seemed, the girls threw the two youngsters together.

Ray was absent from one of the meetings, and I noticed that Marion had a woebegone look on her pretty and usually happy face. Early in the evening she came up to me and told me that she had heard that Ray was about to shove off, and did I think it would be all right for her to go out to his camp that evening to say goodby?

I took her down and bought her a ticket for the half-hour trip and put her aboard the train. I didn't know at the time, and neither did she, that it was the last train of the evening, and that she had a good three-mile walk from the depot to the camp at Titahi Bay. The rest of the story came to me later, and it did much to confirm what I had thought for a long time, that we had some very sound boys in the Marine Corps.

It was quite late when young Marion came up to the sentry box at the gate of the camp, and young Ray was nowhere to be found. Marion had learned, in the little town, that there was no train back to the city

until the next morning, and, to cap things, it was beginning to rain, a cold and persistent rain.

And now for the part of the tale that I really like. The sentry, good luck to him, was a resourceful and presumably a gallant sort of lad, and he looked around to see what he could do for the girl. He found that there was a large truck near the sentry box, and after he had given her a cup of the corrosive coffee that is always on tap in a sentry box, he put her into the large and comfortable front seat of the cab. And not only that — he persuaded a friend to help him and the two of them stood guard over the youngster all night to see that she wasn't molested.

It would have been an easy thing to fall in love with any one of them, for there was a strong attraction about them all, the homely as well as the handsome, and as time went on I began to realize that sooner or later, by reason of some trifling circumstance, one or another of them would appeal to me, and I to her, in terms that couldn't be denied. Perhaps it was this realization that made it easy for me to go along on terms of familiarity with all of them and with special attention to none.

The trifling circumstance was a rainy day that spoiled a hike, and this is the way it happened.

There were many signs that if I should by chance feel strongly enough attracted to one or another of



the girls, I might find ready response. There was, for instance, the evening that I accompanied them to a concert at one of our camps. I had got into the bus last, and had sat in a side seat beside one of the girls. The crowd began singing, and the bus swayed from side to side around the curves in the hilly road.

Suddenly there was a fumbling in the dark beside me, and a small, warm hand grasped mine. Then, as I returned the pressure, she fumbled again, and carried my hand inside her dress so that it cupped itself around her breast, where she pressed it tightly to her. Then she sighed contentedly and lay back against the crook of my arm. She seemed to expect nothing further, and her manner toward me did not change from the casually friendly one it had been before.

Again, one night I was watching the girls as they practiced an action song, *Me he manu-rere*, If I Were a Bird. One of them, a lively and beautiful youngster from the upper part of the North Island, was dressed in a knitted outfit that clung to her like the skin of her perfectly developed young body, and as I watched the rhythmic swaying of her hips I fell into a sort of trance. The perfect control of her muscles and her sense of rhythm transformed the motion of her pelvis and hips into a visible music as intoxicating as the thud of a tom-tom.

Suddenly I came to myself, and as I glanced up at

her in something of embarrassment, she smiled at me, a very understanding and sympathetic sort of smile.

But the final impulse was not there, the unforeseen, negligible detail that would make the difference between casual friendship and passionate attraction. It came finally, of course, and it came from the imponderable trifle that it rained one Thursday in the Hutt Valley.

I stood on the crest of the small knob of a hill that held the buildings of Silverstream Hospital and looked out across the valley of the Hutt River. Another bout of malaria was behind me, and the resultant light and rarefied air of well being sharpened my senses and perceptions, and it seemed to me that I could see every tree and fern on the hills on the opposite side of the valley and every blade of grass on the emerald green meadows along the river. The air was cold and clear and still, and to my right, up the valley, I could see the great rugged wall of the Tararua Mountains. They were covered with snow, for it was late winter, and they were every shade of pink and rose in the afternoon sun. Here and there a sheep moved quietly across an upland meadow, and two or three miles away, in the shadow of the hills across the river, one of the diminutive New Zealand trains crawled along under a diminutive plume of smoke and steam, but in spite of these movements and

sounds there was a profound and restful quiet over the whole scene.

For five days the weather had been perfect — the sun was clear and mellow and golden, and the sky had the particular shade of blue that is reserved for days immediately following long, rainy periods. I prayed that whatever local power had cognizance of the weather would extend his beneficence for one more day, for the next day I was to have a visitor. Te Aroha had promised to come out from the city, sixteen miles away down the river, and walk across the valley and up into the hills with me.

In preparation for the hike I had gone out that very morning and had made a thorough reconnaissance of the route. My walk had taken me from the hill to a small road that ran along the foot of the hill on the near side of the river, up the road, and out into the wide and level flats that bordered the stream bed. Here, on the ancient flat stream bed, could be read something of the history of the terrain, for evidently, in the old days before the aboriginal bush had been cleared away by ax and by fire, the river had flowed slowly and placidly along a wide and well wooded bed. The restraining influence of a heavy overgrowth of woods and underbrush had prevented erosion, and the resulting slowness of flow had allowed the depositing of a heavy covering of rich alluvial top soil.

Then the forests and the bush disappeared, and the stream became a swift torrent. It began to cut into the alluvial plain and constantly to shift its course, and the result was a broad, deep, sandy stream bed that wound a snake-like path through the older and more fertile bed. The latter, drying out somewhat when the water level fell, became a long, broad meadow with small groves of quick-growing trees scattered over it, and the surface was covered with a thick luxuriant turf. Gorse, which had been imported from Scotland and which was rapidly becoming a national pest, had established itself in thickets which divided the plain into small enclosed meadows, a kind of huge maze in which sheep and cattle grazed and grew fat.

## 2

My path, such as it was, lay through these meadows, and as I walked the first mile the sun was still low, and there was a sharpness in the air that made me walk briskly. As it rose higher, however, and as its rays began to beat down on my shoulders, I gradually slackened off until I was strolling leisurely in and out of the small secretive meadows as through the rooms of a large and pleasant house. The gorse and the *manuka* grew to a height of perhaps ten feet, and it was impossible to see more than a hundred yards or so in any direction, but I had begun by taking a bearing

The sheep and the cattle and the occasional horse accepted my intrusion in good part and moved away slowly as I came near them, hardly giving me a glance, for the peacefulness of the scene seemed to have affected them as it had me. The air was clear and soft and quiet, and the sun had the rich golden look that we see in our own Indian Summer in the North, but now and again a light breath of a breeze would come down from the snowclad hills ahead of me and to the right, and the chill it brought reminded me that, sun or no sun, the season was still winter.

The hill rose abruptly, and the slope was steep, so

that fully half the time I scrambled rather than walked. There was a faint trace of a path, the ghost of a path that seemed to have been used long before by men. The earth on its surface was a little smoother than that which lay to each side, and the heavy moss stopped suddenly at its edges. The surface roots of the huge old trees were faintly polished where they crossed it, as though the soft rubbing of countless bare feet had smoothed them with their fleeting, silent touch.

In only a few yards from the spot where I began climbing, I came to one of the innumerable small streams that cascade down the New Zealand hills. It came down from the upper levels of the ridge in a series of steps, and as the tiny falls ended in pools of varying size, so also did the notes of their falling vary in pitch. I left the path and climbed beside the burn, and as I climbed it seemed that the stream played a varying and endless melody that had a wild and uncontrolled rhythm.

Ferns and moss covered the earth, but so deep was the shade and so far removed from any but the most fleeting of the sun's rays that there was no vegetation to speak of on the ground itself. Of fern life there was a staggering variety, from the tiniest and most delicate of plants to the great *punga*, whose fronds

stretched eight and ten feet from the crown of the trunk.

The trees themselves were smooth-trunked and branchless until they had reached high into the upper levels, but from their trunks dangled a mass of creepers and parasitic vines that in some parts of the woods form impassable barriers as tangled and chaotic as the tropical jungles to the north. Some of these creepers had uses, for they were employed by the Maoris in old times for building, the tying of panels of *tukutuku* work, and one type, although I could never find it myself, was of such beauty and hardness that it was used for making the staff-like *taiaha*, the favorite weapon of the ancient Maori warrior. The wood had a lovely, smooth, even cinnamon tint, and the grain was so fine and close as to be almost invisible, while it was so hard that with the tools at his command the old weapon-maker had to grind it down as he would a stone ax. But the resulting weapon had surfaces that were as smooth and polished as those of the nephrite *mere* and tomahawk, and it was almost as durable.

### 3

The slope became less abrupt, and at last I came out into a glade that stretched away before me, almost level save for a gentle rise to the right, for the ridge

line, at whose crest I was standing, crept up little by little toward the much higher reaches of the Tararua Mountains. I turned back, then, for something told me that before long I was to need nourishment, and the rules of the mess were rigid as to hours. I went down the hill at a good pace and across the meadows at a jog-trot, and when I got back to the compound I found that I had just time to wash. It had been a perfect hike, aside from its loneliness, and the ending was felicitous.

I think that I knew the next day would be rainy. In the afternoon of the day of my reconnaissance hike I had stood and looked across the valley and tried to pick out from a distance the route I had taken. And as I looked I tried to imagine what the next day would be like — how I would wander through this meadow and that, pausing here and walking fast there, and always with the small, lovely, somber-eyed girl at my side. I could imagine coming near the edge of the hills and lying in the sun with her at my side; I knew the questions I would put to her, and I tried to imagine the answers to them. And deep in my heart I knew that it would rain, for I was too happy and I had not learned to walk humbly before the gods.





## 4

It rained. I heard the steady, dull beat of it before I opened my eyes in the morning, and my first glance at the window showed me a surface covered with a distorting sheet of water. It kept on, hour after hour, with a persistence that seemed like malevolence to me. I met the little train that came out from the city late in the morning and stopped below the hospital, but even as I went down the hill I knew that there would be no one there. There wasn't, and I stood in the shelter and swore long and bitterly. So long, in fact, that when I looked up the track again I saw the city-bound train coming around a bend a few hundred yards away — and on impulse I swung aboard, paid my shilling, and stood on the open platform between two of the little coaches and rode to town with the soft rain beating in my face and the reek from the soft South Island coal sharp and pleasant in my nostrils.

The city was as wet and forlorn as the countryside had been and only the cenotaph escaped being somber, for it rose sharp and clean and simple into the murky air. The asphalt gleamed with a leaden luster and the gutters ran torrents, and as I stood before the doorway of the house on Tinakori Road an icy rivulet from the eaves above me struck the back of my neck.

I went in, and suddenly my arms were pleasantly full of a slender and strong girl, and there was a soft, firm cheek against mine. I held her so for a moment, just long enough for her to whisper, "Oh, Hone," and then we went along the corridor to the back room, where Pirihira was sitting by the table, finishing off a *taniko* belt.

## 5

There was every sign that it would be a good party. Many of my friends would be there, and Te Rito i te Rangi, a lovely and exotic girl from the Cook Islands, had said that she would be my partner for the evening if I would be willing to take her young cousin also. Finally, the party itself was to be built around a hula given by a group of girls from the same islands, under the leadership of their queen, a charming and intelligent woman, Tikau Love. An exotic affair in charming company, a good party.

My two companions were strangely assorted. Te Rito, the younger sister of Tikau, was a tall, quiet, dark girl, whose manner and appearance were strangely appealing to me. For she was a strange mixture of dignity and timidity, of sophistication and ingenuousness. A student at one of the business schools

in the city, she attended the Ngati Poneke meetings and was learning the action songs of her racial cousins the Maoris, but although she was friendly to the rest, behind her friendliness was a reserve that made it impossible for me to come to know her as I knew the others.

Her cousin, a much younger-looking girl, was her opposite in every way, for where Te Rito was tall and slender, Emily was small and beautifully proportioned; where Te Rito was reserved, Emily was frank and happy; and where Te Rito was dark and typically Polynesian in looks, Emily was disconcertingly blonde, and her Polynesian blood showed only in a certain softness of her features, in the shape of her lips, and in the texture of her brown hair. And where Te Rito's answers to my questions were almost always a simple, "Yes, Captain," or "No, Captain," a word to Emily was generally enough to start her off on a carefree, happy monologue that ran here and there to an end wholly unconnected with the beginning, a soft, chuckling, musically accented running on that was a joy to hear.

The three of us were walking through the center of the city to the old hall where the girls were to dance for us, and I was swinging along at my most comfortable stride. The two girls kept pace without effort, one to each side of me, and I stole a glance now and

again at one or the other of them. Each of them had the free, swinging stride that comes from much walking in bare feet, and with the stride went the attendant erectness of carriage. The tiny drops of misty rain looked like small diamonds on Te Rito's black hair and like pearls on Emily's thick brown crown.

## 6

"Please, Captain, don't ask her to make me do the hula."

The request startled me, for we had been walking silently for several minutes, and it had nothing to do with what we had been discussing before that — which, if I remember, was Hollywood.

"Ask her to make you do the hula — what in the world."

"*Please*, Captain Zimmerman. I don't like to do it," she sounded as though she might cry. I was stumped, completely, and it was no help to hear a gentle giggle from the starboard side, where young and bumptious Emily was enjoying a complete lack of sympathy.

"Now see here, Rito — if you will tell me what in *hell* you're talking about —"

"Oh, Captain, I'm afraid my sister is going to make me do the hula in front of all those people, and you've never seen a Rarotonga hula, Captain, or you'd know what I mean."

“All right, all right. I won't ask her. As a matter of fact, I'll ask her *not* to make you — ”

There was a wail of fright at that, and I reassured her, to the accompaniment of more giggles from the starboard quarter, and we reached the hall before I could investigate more.

## 7

The hall was a fairly large one, and around it, on all sides, was a single row of chairs for the spectators. They were filled, and considerable gold braid and the shine of well polished Sam Browne belts told me that our forces were well represented by the upper ranks. I pushed Rito and Emily toward the cloak room and reconnoitered the situation.

The crowd was a mixed one, for there were civilians scattered in amongst the military, and Pakeha amongst the Maori. American servicemen rubbed shoulders with New Zealanders and Rarotongans and Samoans, and the murmurings of four languages beat on my ears from every side. I stood and listened for a moment, and then a deep chant rose from Mrs. Love's group that was seated on the floor at one end of the hall, and I forgot my own people and their friends and watched the hula.

There must have been thirty people in the group, of whom ten were men and young men. These were

in a circle on the floor, cross-legged, and from them came the chant that had taken my attention. In front of them, facing from them in a semicircle, were the girls, dressed for the dance and swaying their hips in time to the music. Mrs. Love was between the horns of the crescent, watching her girls, singing to them in a low voice, and now and again speaking to them, coaching them. She too was in native dress and even handsomer than she had been in Pakeha dress. She also was swaying gently in time to the chant, and her hands were moving rhythmically before her. The tempo increased, and a new melody flickered for a moment in the pattern of the music and then was lost again, and suddenly she raised her arms above her head and called out, sharply, and the hula began.

The first thought that entered my mind, after the girls began their movements, was that I understood exactly what it was that Te Rito had meant a few minutes before. The second thought was that I had seldom seen such uninhibited grace.

The costumes were scanty, very scanty, and entirely unlike the Maori dancing costume, for where the latter was substantial and consisted of a heavy and adequate flax skirt and a knit "top part," as Pirihira euphemistically called the tight bodices, the Rarotongans girls wore a flimsy and revealing skirt of shredded bark, a small brassiere, and a judiciously placed

flower. They danced with bare feet and bare midriff, and the object of the dance, if indeed it had an explicit purpose, seemed to be to lift the pelvic region as far from the floor as was physically possible and having got it there, to move it rhythmically to an off-beat of the chanting.

The pretty, ruddy-skinned youngsters danced with abandon and skill and obvious pleasure, and as they danced held their hands high above their heads — there was no matching the meaning of the song with formalized movements of the hands as there was among the Maori. Now and again, when one of them felt that the rhythm of the dance had entered into her so that it flowed in her muscles as the blood flowed in her veins, she would break away from her place in the circle and dance up the floor before the spectators, an impromptu dance that was as frank and appealing as the gesture of a baby.

The chanting died away and the group on the floor broke up and scattered among the spectators, and Mrs. Love came over to speak to us. She greeted me by name and asked me how I liked the dance.

“Mrs. Love, I can’t remember ever having seen such delightful subumbilical activity before,” and immediately I felt sorry for the flippant answer, for she replied without batting an eyelash,

“Oh, Captain, it’s so nice of you to say so.”

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I still don't know who succeeded in ribbing whom.

There was dancing for everyone then, and I did my share of it, with Rito and with the other girls. Emily refused, when I asked her, saying that she didn't understand American dancing, but after a few minutes she consented to try. Two paces were enough to tell me that if there was anything the youngster didn't know about the real purpose of dancing, it must have been something so esoteric that it had never occurred to me, and when I made my way back to the group by the door, after the number was over, I was in a daze. For young Emily had danced the foxtrot as she would have danced a hula, with her whole body pressed tightly against mine and with every muscle in it moving rhythmically to the beat of the music.

"Hello, Hone," and I jumped, for the voice had interrupted a daydream brought on by the dance with Emily.

"Hello, Aroha — I didn't know you were coming tonight. Is Wai here, too?"

"Yes, she's inside. I wanted to tell you that I'm going away."

"Away? For heaven's sake, where to?"

"Home. To Pukehou — up near Otane, you know."

“What’s the matter? Why are you going — aren’t you at the university now?”

“Holidays, Hone, holidays — I’m going home to see the family and go barefoot and eat eels and bathe in the stream. I’ll be gone almost a month.”

A month. That would mean that my chances of seeing Te Aroha again were slim, for I was at Silverstream Hospital still, and the signs pointed to my being sent home as physically unfit for duty. There was a gone feeling in me as I heard her, and it came to me that the afternoons and the evenings at the club would be lonely for me, for we had drifted into the habit of spending our spare hours together, late in the day, at the tea shops or at Tinakori Road, or in wandering up and down the hills of the city. We talked for a minute and then returned to the hall, and shortly afterward I left to go back to the hospital.

“By the way, doctor, — what are my chances for a couple of days leave?” The Commander seemed to be in a receptive mood during his morning rounds, and there was no harm in trying.

“Three days limit — you’ll have to be back by Friday.”

I sent a telegram to Pukehou and packed my gear, and early the next morning, at the station in Well-

ington, I found an answer. "See you Tuesday in Otane." The train was moving as I jumped aboard.

All the way up the coast, past Paekakariki and Waikanae and Otaki, I watched the peaks of the Tararua Mountains, off to my right. They were blinding white when the sun struck them, and when a cloud obscured them, they took on a cold blue tint, and the rocky cliffs stood out clearly. The plain by the sea was soft and green, however, and in the small towns the flowers were in full bloom. The air was clear and cool and quiet, and the faint whiff of soft coal smoke that seeped into the coach now and again was spicy and not at all unpleasant.

We stopped for tea at Paekakariki and again at Palmerston North, and it was well toward afternoon when we turned away from the coast and began to cross the central part of the island. There is a gorge just above Palmerston North, and the tracks follow a rushing, roaring torrent for several miles to emerge finally on a high plateau. As we came out of this, I felt that the air was colder and sharper, and while we had passed the Tararua Mountains, another range had taken their place, and it marched, tall and white and forbidding, along the course of the tracks away to the northward.

The countryside rolled gently, and everywhere there were sheep. The low, rounded hills were bare

of undergrowth and the turf was close-cropped and emerald green. Here and there, on the higher of them, small patches of snow lingered in the shaded gullies, and gray clouds, far to the south, told that more was on the way.

But the sun remained for the rest of the day, and toward evening I moved my bag out to the platform between the coaches. The little station flashed into sight, and as I swung off and jumped down to the graveled pathway, I saw Te Aroha running down from the platform, her hair blown back from her face and tossing in the cold breeze which had whipped her cheeks until they glowed.

“And now where is the inn?” We had been talking for perhaps half an hour, walking to and fro on the winding country road, and it came to me that I should have to get settled for the night. She stepped back a bit and looked at me sharply.

“The inn? Well, we have one, just up the road, but why do you want to go there? You can if you like, of course, but we have a house — ”

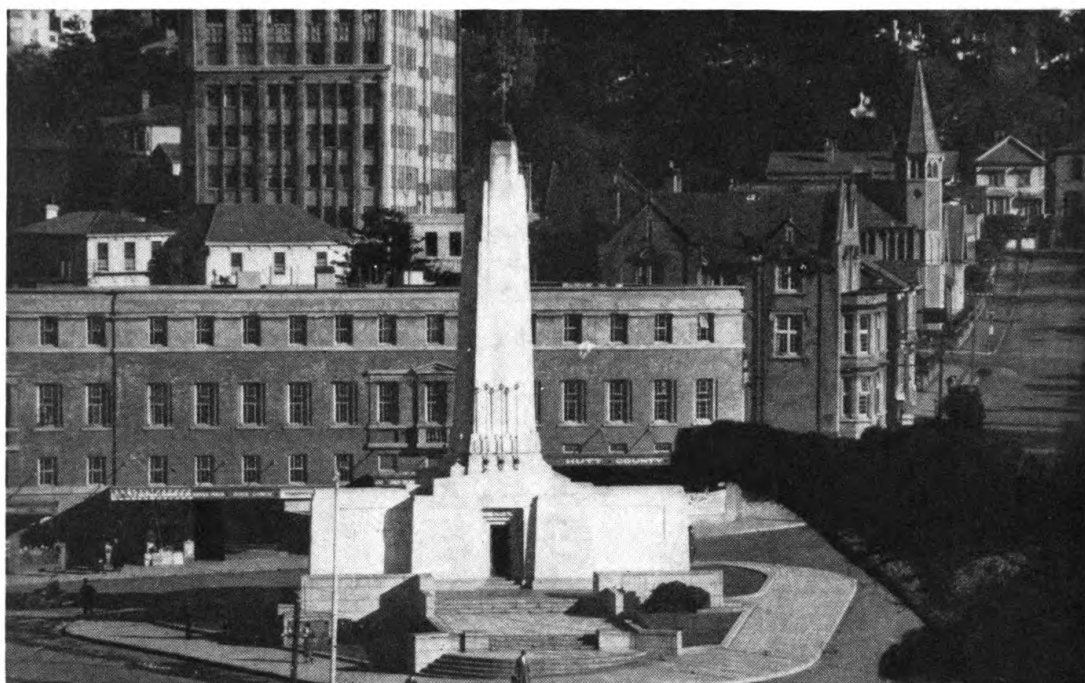
It was just getting dark as we came in through the barnyard and into the lamplight of the kitchen. An old, old woman nodded at me as I was presented to her, and Mana, Te Aroha’s mother, held my hand long and stared into my eyes without speaking. She was a somber and strong-looking woman, and her

eyes were a disturbing hazel color, and she gazed at me as though she wanted to remember my face forever. Finally she sighed and dropped my hand with a murmured word or two, and Te Aroha and I went into the front room.

It was a small room, and the front window looked out across the garden and the valley to the low hills across the marsh. The few pieces of furniture in the corners of the room were well made and handsome, and the walls were hung with old *piu-piu* skirts and old weapons. The leg bone of a moa, one of the huge ostrich-like birds that at one time roamed the country, hung over the door, a grisly, blackened thing that was larger than the leg bone of an ox.

A bright fire burned in the brick fireplace opposite the door, and I stood before it to warm myself as Rana, the father, came in. He walked up and shook my hand and then held it as Mana had done, and as he held it he looked at me long and earnestly. Then he let it fall and stepped back and began to speak.

What he said was formal and dignified in phrasing, but there was nothing artificial or stilted about it. It was as though the small, stocky man with the iron grey shock of hair realized that what he had to say was worthy of careful saying and that his thoughts and feelings were worthy of the most careful expression.



"... the cenotaph . . . rose sharp and clean and simple"



Sir Apirana Ngata bridges the old and the new

He said that his daughter had told him that I was ill, that my body was weak and my mind tired, and that I was far from home and perhaps lonely. He told me that he hoped I would come and eat and rest, the house was peaceful and the people in it were my friends, I could rest with them until I wished to leave. He said it was an honor for them to have me with them, and that it was a pleasure, and he hoped that the day of my leaving would be far off.

He spoke quietly and earnestly and carefully, and as he spoke he gazed into my face as though he wanted to be sure that the meaning of what he was saying came to me, as though by an effort of the will he could send directly to me, without the medium of speech, the thoughts and feelings of his heart and his mind. And as he spoke, it seemed to me that something almost tangible came into being, a bond between us, a rapport that enabled me to sense the entire meaning of what he was trying to say to me.

As he spoke and as I listened, Te Aroha stood a bit to one side, silent and watching us intently. I could see the firelight flash in her eyes as she looked from one to the other of us, and her cheeks were bronze and ruddy in its glow, for it was the only light in the room. She was as intent as either of us, and as Rana pressed home some point with quiet insistence, she gazed at me as though she, too, were try-

ing, with all the power of her mind, to impress it upon me.

Finally he came to an end, and he and Te Aroha looked at me anxiously and expectantly. A reply was required, and I gave it. I spoke in the same terms and style that he had used, and I tried to say what I thought and felt without restraint and without self-consciousness. It was easy, I found, and it was pleasant, this matter of speaking freely and openly what was in my heart as well as in my mind. It was a new experience for me, it was refreshing.

There was a tiny smile at the corner of Te Aroha's mouth as I ended, and it seemed to me that I had just come through some sort of a test as far as she was concerned. I had tried to answer one of her own people in his own terms; for the attempt, at least, I got points. She sighed and walked away to help Mana, who was preparing food in the kitchen, and Rana turned to me again, and this time his tone was less formal. We chatted about everyday matters, and finally the talk turned to family life. He told me of Te Aroha — and I learned with some surprise that she was an adopted child.

“One day I was walking around the land here and visiting some of my people, and I came to a house that was poor and that was not well kept. I heard a baby cry; that is not a good sound; I went in. I saw the

child that cried, it was ill, it was poorly fed, its skin had broken out. And I called out to the mother, she came.

“ ‘Is that your child?’ I said. And she said yes.

“ ‘Bring me an ax,’ I said. She looked hard at me, she went, for I have authority among the people here in this neighborhood. She brought me the ax, I did not take it.

“ ‘Now, kill that child’ I said. She looked at me, she did not move. ‘Do as I say, woman,’ I repeated, and she screamed and began to move away, she dropped the ax.

“ ‘All right. I shall take the child, a person who treats a baby so has no right to children. It is my child, I shall take it.’ And I took that child, it was sick, my friends said I was foolish, it would die. But it did not die, it lived. It was my little girl, Te Aroha.

“And now Te Aroha has brought a child to us, she brought Koro. There was a young woman carrying a child here two years ago, she already had several children, her house was small. Te Aroha saw her, she told her that when the child was born she wanted to have it. And the woman said yes, and we have Koro.”

At this moment the baby himself came in with Mana, who said that food was ready. He was a strong, chubby little chap, with a strange look of maturity and intolerance on his face — he was well named, for

his name meant Old Man. But now Rana was speaking again in the formal way, inviting me to eat. He came to an end, and I turned to the table, where Mana had been busy placing food.

I saw that two places only had been laid, and I took it for granted that he and I were to have dinner together. Mana had left the room, and he and I and Te Aroha were still standing before the fire. He looked at me and smiled and said goodnight and went out. I stared after him, and then —

“Well, aren’t you hungry? Because I am.” And as Te Aroha said this she sat down at the table and grinned at me. We ate and talked, and then she carried away the plates.

We sat before the fire, on the floor, on a lovely Samoan mat, and as the fire died away we fed it with huge pine cones. She took up an unfinished *taniko* belt and went to work on it, talking all the while in her low, musical voice, telling me tales of the local people, her tribe, the Whatu-i-Apiti.

She was pure Maori — I knew that and I had known it for some time, but never until that night did I understand just how deeply she felt about her people and about their traditions. She spoke the language perfectly, and she was beginning to take an interest in the traditional things — the formal greetings and the calls that are used in mourning for the

newly dead, the various handicrafts. All those things interested her and she spoke of them, but it was a small incident that impressed me more than all the explanation, a reflex action that told how nearly instinctive her feelings were.

As she worked, a small heap of fluff piled up at her side, the ends of the threads and ravelings from them. She patted them into a ball, and the draft from the fireplace blew the thing around, here and there, over the floor. It annoyed me, and at last I picked it up and tossed it into the fire. Quick as a flash, her hand went into the flames after it, so quickly that it did not burn. She put it again on the floor beside her and she told me quietly that it was not the custom to destroy the waste from a piece of handwork until the article was finished. There would be bad luck on the article if that rule was not followed.

Finally she put aside her work, and we put out the candles that were on the table. Then we sat down again on the mat, we fed the fire, and then we watched it die away until only the red coals remained.

I went out early to the pool under the small water fall beside the tool shed. It was raining, and the falling drops were warm on my back after the icy stream, as I stood in the midst of a thicket of ferns and dressed. The table was set once more, again with but two places, and Rana and Mana were there to say good

morning. As I spoke to Mana I placed a little greenstone pendant in her hand and closed her fingers around it. She looked at it and at me and hurried from the room — and so Maori was I becoming that when Te Aroha told me a few minutes later that Mana was crying in the kitchen, I knew the gift had pleased her.

SHORTLY after I returned from Papa-aruhe, Commander Hamblitt and I decided to give an American style party for the girls of the club as a partial return for the hospitality they had shown us. The Commander was a large and kindly man who had recently had his ship shot from under him, and he felt as I did toward the girls. They, in their turn, adored him, and there were whoops of joy when the subject of a party was mentioned.

Witerina-te-Miriarangi Harris agreed to let us use her house, a modern, pleasant little bungalow on the heights above Oriental Bay, and on the appointed night we gathered there. For those who liked it and could handle it there was liquor. For the others there was beer and still milder drink. There was food — salad made from the huge and succulent crayfish that were so plentiful in the nearby streams, sandwiches made from the pungent little mutton sausages of the country, and pastry.

Suddenly, well along in the evening, Bonnie Amohau came up to me in her direct and forthright way, and as I saw her coming I wondered what outspoken

remark she would make this time. For Bonnie feared neither God, man, nor devil — she was directly descended from old Te Amohau, a famous old fighting chief of the Arawa tribe, and in her speech and actions she was as disconcertingly effective and direct as he had been with his greenstone warclub.

“Captain, come here. I want to talk to you.”

“Yes, Bonnie. What can I do for you?”

“Captain, how much money have you got with you?”

I gasped a little at that, for it was going a bit strong even for the *enfant terrible* of the club, but I knew Bonnie well enough to realize that when she asked a question, no matter how outrageous it might seem, she had a good reason for asking it. I took out my billfold and emptied it on a table.

“Two pounds ten shillings and a bit of silver, Bonnie,” and I pushed it toward her.

“Well, you’d better keep this,” she said as she generously shoved the silver and the little reddish ten shilling note back to me. “This two pounds’ll help out a little. And now I’ll tell you why I want it.

“Do you remember asking me about Hine Edwards a long time ago?” My face must have shown that for the moment I was puzzled, for she went on, “You know —— the girl from Otaki. Sure, I thought you’d remember. Well, she came into Wellington a few

months ago and went to work in the battery company here, and she didn't know anything at all about living in the city. She got a room that she had to pay too much money for, and then she had to get some clothes because she didn't have enough of them, and so she hasn't had enough to eat since she came to town.

"I've tried to make her take some of my money, Captain, but she won't listen to me. But if I take this and tell her that you said she had to take it, then she will, because you are a lot older than she is and you know her people in Otaki."

She put the money away and went off to the kitchen, and I sat back and thought, with shame, that it had been a month or more that I hadn't been to Otaki, to see the people who had been so good and so hospitable to me.

That night I wrote to Te Aroha, who was still at her home near Pukehou and told her that I would be up in a few days to bring her back to Wellington, so that she could stay with me until I left for the States. And I told her that when she came, I wanted her to come to Otaki with me.

2

"Hone, Hapuku is dead, the funeral is tomorrow. Will you come to the *tangi* with us?"

This was the greeting from Aroha as I jumped off

the train at Otane a few days later, when I returned to visit. We started off up the road as we had before, and once more it was a cold, clear, windy evening, and the air that beat against our faces was clean and sweet. And once more I had the strange feeling that there was no one in the entire countryside but the two of us — not a living soul in sight, and no sound but the sighing of the wind in the evergreens beside the road.

Little by little, and in a roundabout way, I got the story of the tragedy. Hapuku, who was a neighbor, had gone to his fields with his wife and his children to gather his potato crop; and to help with the hauling he had borrowed a tractor, with whose operation he was none too familiar. On the way home, while pulling the family behind him in a small trailer, he had tried to cross a small ravine and climb the rise beyond it. The tractor had reared over and caught him beneath it, and he had died on the ground there, before his family. Now he was at the *whare runanga*, the meeting house, and tomorrow the traditional mourning ceremony was to take place.

Once more there was dinner for the two of us, alone, by the fire in the front room, and once more I bathed in the icy water of the stream that fell in a cascade down the sharp hill behind the yard. There was breakfast for us in the same room, and then the

rest of the family came and we prepared to go down to the meeting house for the *tangi*.

The meeting house lay in a small meadow perhaps one hundred yards wide by three hundred deep. One short side of the field lay along the highway and was fenced off from it, and in one corner of it, also on the highway, was the tiny burial ground. From the highway the ground sloped upward gently, and as we came in the gate I could see the *whare* in the far left-hand corner, facing inward toward the center of the field at an angle. A considerable crowd of people was seated on the ground before the house and some distance from it, and as we stopped, just inside the gate, I heard a strange, high-pitched humming sound, a thin wailing that had a strangely familiar ring to it, a similarity to something I had heard so long before that I could not identify it.

Our group consisted of Mana, Rana, Te Aroha and myself, and several people we had met on the road. We had halted on the edge of the turf within the fence, and I looked inquiringly at Te Aroha, wondering what the next move was to be. The older people were murmuring in subdued tones, and I didn't want to speak aloud. She caught my eye, shook her head slightly, and motioned me to come to her side.

Finally the oldest woman of the little group started to walk slowly in the direction of the *whare*, and as

she walked she began a low, wailing call. I could not catch the words, but the tone was interesting. It quavered and rose and fell, and the notes were not in the intervals of our scale, for I thought that I could distinguish quarter tones in the quavering melody. She walked slowly, dragging her feet, with her hands stretched forward and half raised, palms upward as though she were making a visible offering of grief and sympathy, and we followed after her.

Finally she stopped, after moving some twenty yards, her hands still outstretched, and her wailing died away. Then, from the little front platform of the *whare*, an answering call came, thin and clear and musical, and as I looked closely, I could see the dark figure of an old woman in one corner, her right hand raised above her head. As I watched and listened, she bowed her head and beat upon what seemed to be a small platform at her side in an ecstasy of grief.

Again we moved forward slowly, while our leader called, and again we stopped. And always, behind the wailing of our leader and the answer from the *whare*, there was the tantalizingly familiar sound that I had noticed when first we came in. It continued unbroken throughout our trip, a faint, clear monotone that varied in intensity but never in pitch.

At last we stopped at a distance of a few yards from

the *whare*, and I saw that the old woman who had answered us and who could, perhaps, be called the chief mourner, sat beside the coffin, which was placed on a pair of sawhorses. Above it, against the wall of the house, were hung photographs, and on the opposite end of the platform sat a row of old women, seven of them, and it was from that group that the familiar wailing sound came — and suddenly I realized what it called to my memory. It was exactly the sound that one hears on a bitterly cold night in the northern United States, when the telegraph wires, tautened by the intense cold, hum and sing like a gigantic Aeolian harp.

A short interchange of the formal wailings took place, and then our group scattered and sat down on the ground with those who had already arrived to watch the newcomers. Each group that came in followed the same course we had followed, and each of them was led by an old woman — the ritual of mourning seemed to be the responsibility of the women. The calls that were used were of similar pattern, but they varied considerably in length, and apparently the old woman by the coffin was obliged to vary the length of her calls to suit the whim of the guests and to mourn with them as long as they wished to mourn.

Only once was the rule regarding leadership by a

“Look,” she said, “he always takes the part of a woman,” and she smiled tolerantly.

The groups were still coming in when I noticed some activity in a far corner of the field, off to one side of a building that was used as a dining hall. Half a dozen men were busy around what seemed to be a newly dug pit, and because the scene I was watching

had become repetitious and because every new thing I saw was interesting, I wandered over.

A pit had indeed been dug, eight feet square and a yard deep, and in the bottom of the pit a roaring fire was just beginning to die down and go to embers. In it, scattered around the bottom of the hole, large rocks and pieces of metal glowed in the heat, and as I got there, the men were removing the still-burning logs and allowing the embers to lie among the rocks. The dirt that had been removed from the pit was in a heap to one side, and on this heap was a number of pans and tubs of food — meat and squash and *puha*, onions and potatoes and *kumara*, mixed together in layers. There were also some flat, hastily woven baskets of flax, with square slabs of the meat of the huge eels that are caught in the nearby swamps, the *tuna*.

It was the first time I had seen a *hangi*, and I watched closely as the food baskets and pans were laid on the hot rocks and then covered with layer after layer of green flax leaves. I watched water being sprinkled copiously on the resulting green mound and the steam begin to rise from it. Then I watched it being covered with a mound of earth dug from the pit. Plenty of earth was put on, until it rose well above the surface of the ground around it, and as I

walked away, back to the crowd before the *whare*, steam was seeping through it, steam with an appetizing odor.

A large, grave, dignified old man was speaking as I sat down on the turf beside Te Aroha. He held a stout stick in his hand, and his hat remained on his head, and he was speaking directly to Hapuku, listening there in his coffin. His phrases were formal and dignified in tone, and his voice was low and quiet, as though he had no concern with whether or not they were heard by the assembly. He spoke earnestly, as though he were anxious that his arguments be understood, and as he spoke he gestured restrainedly with his cane. Te Aroha told me that while I was gone, Rana, her father, had spoken to welcome the people — first the immediate tribesmen of the dead man, then the people from more distant areas, and finally myself, the man from over the seas.

Hori, the speaker, came to the end of his talk and sat down and gazed at the far-away hills with a detached, remote look on his strong old face, and his place was taken by a younger and livelier man. This chap also spoke directly to Hapuku, but instead of the grave, earnest tone that Hori had used, the new speaker seemed to be almost jocular, and at intervals a subdued snicker ran through the crowd. I caught a word here and a phrase there, and what I heard

didn't seem to be a funeral oration by any means. I tossed an inquiring glance at the girl beside me, she was grinning broadly at the speaker's latest sally. She whispered that the speaker was kidding Hapuku, ribbing him, making fun of him, and from then on I listened even more intently, and Te Aroha gave me a running account of what he was saying. It is the custom, I was told, to poke gentle fun at the departed, and I listened to the good-natured scoffing, a kind of humorous scolding of Hapuku for his tampering with new-fangled machinery that he knew nothing about just to show what a smart lad he was. He had wanted to show off, and now look what it had got him. A weird and macabre sort of joshing, with no malice whatever — just the tone that a mother would take with a child that has hurt himself a bit through his own foolishness.

Then the speeches came to an end, and there was a short church service by the Church of England and the Ratana, a native offshoot of the same church. Hapuku was buried, he was gone, and we went to the dining hall.

The hall was full of people, and the food was heaped on the long crude tables, and we fell upon it. The sun was sinking low behind the hills to the north-west, and the breakfast that Te Aroha and I had stowed away was only a vague memory. We sat down.

3

Only one memory of the meal itself stands out — across the narrow table sat two young Pakeha New Zealanders. I didn't meet them, and I don't know what brought them to the *tangi*, but I do recall that as they ate the boiled potatoes and watery cabbage that someone had cooked for them out of deference to their taste, they gazed at me with a sort of horrid fascination as I ate. I can't blame them, for I was getting away with plate after plate of *tuna* and *ku-mara* and *puha*, and I succeeded in laying away so much of it that the Maoris told me afterward that they were glad I liked their food.

We were preparing to leave, for the meal was over and the hall was full of people visiting and gossiping. As we said goodby to group after group, Te Aroha came up to me leading a little old woman. Her face was deeply lined, and among the wrinkles of the lower part of her face I could see a *moko* done in the cruel old fashion, carved deeply around the lips and on the chin with a sharp clam shell so that the cicatrices were prominent and deep. She was tiny and fragile and her hair was white, but her eyes were sharp and humorous, and when she spoke, her voice was clear and strong and musical.

"Captain, I think we must be related," she said in

English as good as my own. "I am part American, Captain, for my grandfather was a sailor on a whaling ship. He came ashore when his ship was up near the East Cape, and he married a Maori girl and lived here. That was a good idea, Captain and I think you ought to do it, too. Why don't you stay and marry her?" And she pointed to Te Aroha, who was standing at my side.

A roar of laughter went up from the crowd around us, and when I saw the look of horror on Te Aroha's face, it was all I could do to keep from joining in. But my own face was red, and its redness fed the mirth of the crowd and brought forth direct and salty remarks in two languages, and I broke for the door, hoping to God that Rana and Mana had been out of hearing.

4

We went back to Papa-aruhe, the little house beside the waterfall, and once more there was dinner for two in the living room. Once again Rana and Mana said goodnight to us before we sat down to it, and once again we lay together on the old Samoan mat and watched the fire die away to glowing embers. Then we slept, and early the next morning we returned to Wellington.

My last month in that city was a completely happy

one, in spite of the fact that it was becoming increasingly clear to me that my time was growing short in the country. The malaria was relentless, and I was being ground down constantly by it. But I was happy with Te Aroha, who was a perfect companion, and perhaps the knowledge that I was to leave soon added a nostalgic savor to the situation, leavening it and removing from it any possibility of boredom.

And I found also that the fact that we were obviously lovers caused a subtle change in my relationship with the rest of the Maoris. Where before I had been accepted as a friend and a guest, with open arms, I was now treated as though I were one of them, as though by the fact of my relationship with one of them I had absorbed something of the race itself. It was as though Te Aroha, in accepting me as she did, had in fact acted for her entire people and that her decision was in some queer way binding upon them and agreeable to them.

Something of their changed attitude seemed to work a like change in me, for it seemed to me that in the course of our long and intimate talks I was able to absorb more and more of the point of view of the Maori and to understand something of his reactions to given situations. I found, for instance, that I could understand and appreciate the words of the old father

of a young hero, when he was advised of the boy's death.

Te Moana Nui a Kiwa Ngarimu was an officer in the famous Maori Battalion in North Africa, and in an action at Tebaga Gap he found himself, with a few of his men, who were also his fellow tribesmen, atop a small hill. He and two others were left alive of his group, and the officers of his battalion, from whom he was separated by a few hundred precious yards, urged him to withdraw and to rest. His reply was that of a man and a Maori, and when I heard what it was, something deep down in me, something that had been awakened by the intimacy of my association with his racial fellows — that something rose up and shouted. For he refused to go out of the fight, he said that he would stay a little while beside his men.

The boy died there, and the coveted Victoria Cross was awarded him. And when his father heard of the circumstances, he said, "I am glad that he answered as he did. I would have hung my head in shame had he withdrawn."

Things like that took on for me a deeper significance than they would have a month before. And each little incident, each tale I was told of family ties and tribal rivalries, each meeting with friends, or

with relatives of friends, wove new threads into the bonds that held me to the country and to the people, so that when I went out onto the fantail of the great ship that carried me home early in October and looked out across the grey, choppy seas that had once seen the coming of the great canoes and saw the rugged hills fade away, I was not conscious at all of sadness. Rather I felt that I should never again be alone, that the memory of Te Aroha and her people would be with me always, and that some day I would return to Aotea-roa.



Glossary of Maori Words

IT is impossible to explain the sounds of one language in terms of those of another, even if the two languages are closely related in structure and background. When they are not related, and when their respective histories and backgrounds are divergent, the difficulty encountered in trying to give an adequate and only approximately correct picture is almost insuperable.

The following glossary is presented hesitantly with that difficulty clearly in the mind of the writer. He says only that the vowels are a faint approximation, in each case, of what we habitually call the "Italian" or "Continental" vowels. The consonants, with three exceptions, are enough like their English counterparts to cause no trouble. The three that will cause trouble are, (1) *ng*, which is pronounced like *ng* in *singing*, with no indication of the *g*; (2) *t*, which is sounded explosively with the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper front teeth; (3) *wh*, which is pronounced as *f*, but with the lower lip not quite touching the upper front teeth.

AOTÉA RÓA — The Long White Cloud: the North Island.

E — Vocative particle, like the *O* in *O Friend*.

MÉRE — Battle axe, a spatulate, sharp-edged weapon, generally made of greenstone.

ТЭКО-ТЕКО — The formalized human figure at the top of a house.



TENÁ KOE — A greeting. Literally, *So that is you.*

TÓHUNGA — A skilled man, in the old days. Almost exactly equivalent to priest. *Tohunga whakairo* — man skilled in woodcarving.

TÓTARA — Native tree whose wood resembles sequoia. Formerly used for canoes.

TÚKU-TÚKU — Ornamental lattice work.

TÚPUNA — Ancestors.

WHÁRE RÚNANGA — Tribal meeting house.

WHAKAMÚTUNGA

(Which means The End)

TYPE NOTE

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